

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

# LEGISLATOR'S GUIDE 2013



## INTRODUCTION

November 2012

**Dear Senator-elect:**

**Congratulations and welcome to the Nebraska Legislature.**

**The Nebraska Legislator's Guide** is designed to provide you, as a new senator, with a concise source of information about the **Nebraska Legislature**, its organization and services available to you.

In gathering this information, each of the legislative division directors was contacted to contribute information about his or her area. We wish to acknowledge and thank those people whose cooperation and thoughtful contributions made the **Legislator's Guide** possible.

While you may already be acquainted with much of the information included in the guide, it is our desire that it will provide a handy reference tool of basic information to help make your first days and weeks in the **Legislature** a little easier.

I hope that you find these materials useful and that you will not hesitate to contact me or other legislative staff if you have any questions.

I look forward to working with you.

**Sincerely,**



**Patrick J. O'Donnell**  
**Clerk of the Legislature**

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## HISTORY

As you already know, you are a member of a unique group.

You have been elected to the only one-house, nonpartisan Legislature in the nation.

The other 49 states have two-chamber legislatures organized along political party lines, as Nebraska once did.

From the days when Nebraska was a territory until 1937, the state had a two-house Legislature, modeled after the U.S. Congress and the British Parliament.

Proposals to change from the bicameral to a unicameral legislature failed numerous times between 1913 and 1933. But in 1934, voters

accepted an amendment to establish a unicameral legislature proposed by a committee under the leadership of John N. Norton.

For years, Norton and a United States senator from Nebraska, George Norris, had been advocating the merits of a one-house, nonpartisan legislature. The two-house system, Norris ar-

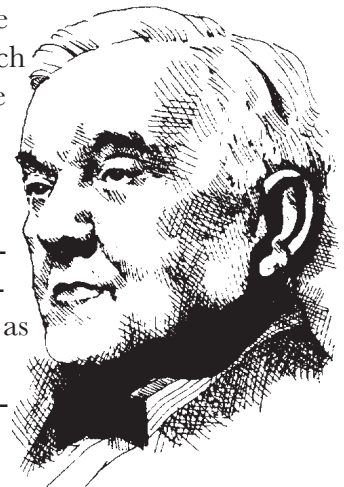
gued, was outdated and unnecessary. He saw it

as a custom based on the British class system, which he believed had no place in a democratic society.

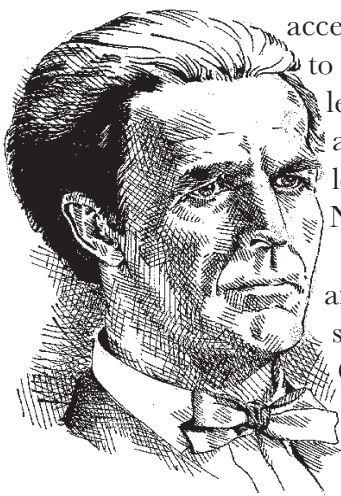
Norris and supporters of the unicameral system also criticized another feature of the two-house legislature known as the conference committee. This committee consists of a group of senators and representatives meeting in closed session to work out differences in similar bills passed by both houses. Norris said the conference committee was contrary to democratic government and led to private negotiation and compromise.

Aside from philosophical issues, Nebraskans also saw that paring down the legislative branch of government would save the state money, an important consideration during the Depression years.

In the face of much editorial opposition, a majority of voters in 84 of the state's 93 counties approved the unicameral amendment in 1934, thus embarking upon what was called a "great experiment" in government.



**George Norris**



**John N. Norton**

## MEMBERSHIP

Nebraska's first Unicameral Legislature met in January 1937.

At that time, there were 43 members. Today, the Nebraska Legislature consists of 49 members, and about 37,272 people live in each of the state's 49 districts. The existing district boundaries were redrawn in 2011 to conform to updated census figures.

As you know, you and your colleagues serve four-year terms and are elected from "single-member" districts, which means that only one legislator represents each district.

No more than half of the Legislature's membership stands for election or reelection during any given election year. That is because people from odd-numbered districts do not seek election at the same time as those from even-numbered districts.

### Terms of Taking Office

#### **Article III, Sec. 7**

#### **Legislators; terms; effect of redistricting; election; salary; expenses; mileage.**

At the general election to be held in November 1964, one-half the members of the Legislature, or as nearly thereto as may be practicable, shall be elected for a term of four years and the remainder for a term of two years, and thereafter all members shall be elected for a term of four years, with the manner of such election to be determined by the Legislature. When the Legislature is redistricted, the members elected prior to the redistricting shall continue in office, and the law providing for such redistricting shall where necessary specify the newly established district which they shall represent for the balance of their term. Each member shall be nominated and elected in a nonpartisan manner and without any indication on the ballot that

he or she is affiliated with or endorsed by any political party or organization. Each member of the Legislature shall receive a salary of not to exceed one thousand dollars per month during the term of his or her office. In addition to his or her salary, each member shall receive an amount equal to his or her actual expenses in traveling by the most usual route once to and returning from each regular or special session of the Legislature. Members of the Legislature shall receive no pay nor perquisites other than his or her salary and expenses, and employees of the Legislature shall receive no compensation other than their salary or per diem.

#### **Article III, Sec. 8**

#### **Legislators; qualifications; one-year residence in district; removal from district, effect.**

No person shall be eligible to the office of member of the Legislature unless on the date of the general election at which he is elected, or on the date of his appointment he is a registered voter, has attained the age of twenty-one years and has resided within the district from which he is elected for the term of one year next before his election, unless he shall have been absent on the public business of the United States or of this State. And no person elected as aforesaid shall hold his office after he shall have removed from such district.

#### **Article III, Sec. 9**

#### **Legislators; disqualifications; election to other office; resignation required.**

No person holding office under the authority of the United States, or any lucrative office under the authority of this state, shall be eligible

to or have a seat in the Legislature. No person elected or appointed to the Legislature shall receive any civil appointment to a state office while holding membership in the Legislature or while the Legislature is in session, and all such appointments shall be void. Except as otherwise provided by law, a member of the Legislature who is elected to any other state or local office prior to the end of his or her term in the Legislature shall resign from the Legislature prior to the commencement of the legislative session during which the term of the state or local office will begin.

**Article III, Sec. 12**  
**Legislators; terms; limitation.**

- (1) No person shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Legislature for four years next after the expiration of two consecutive terms regardless of the district represented.
- (2) Service prior to January 1, 2001, as a member of the Legislature shall not be counted for the purpose of calculating consecutive terms in subsection (1) of this section.
- (3) For the purpose of this section, service in office for more than one-half of a term shall be deemed service for a term.

## **Qualifications**

In order to serve as a member of the Nebraska Legislature, a person:

1. Must be nominated and elected in a nonpartisan manner and without any indication on the ballot that he or she is affiliated with or endorsed by any political party or organization.
2. Must be 21 years old on the date of the general election at which he or she is elected.
3. Must reside in the district from which he or she is elected.
4. Must be a registered voter.
5. Must not hold another office under the authority of the United States, or any lucrative office under the authority of the state; must not receive any civil appointment to a state office while a member of the Legislature or while the Legislature is in session.

## **Vacancies**

According to the Nebraska State Constitution, the governor has the power to fill a vacancy in the Legislature by appointing a person meeting the necessary qualifications. The election requirements for an appointee are stipulated in state statutes.

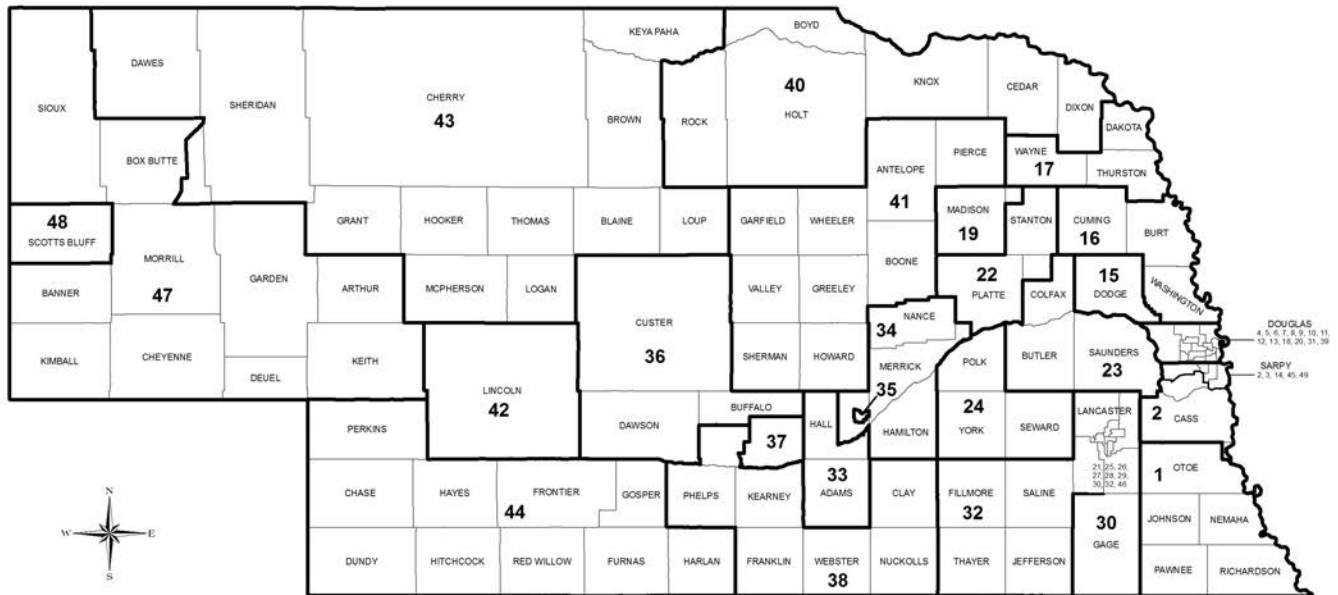


# NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

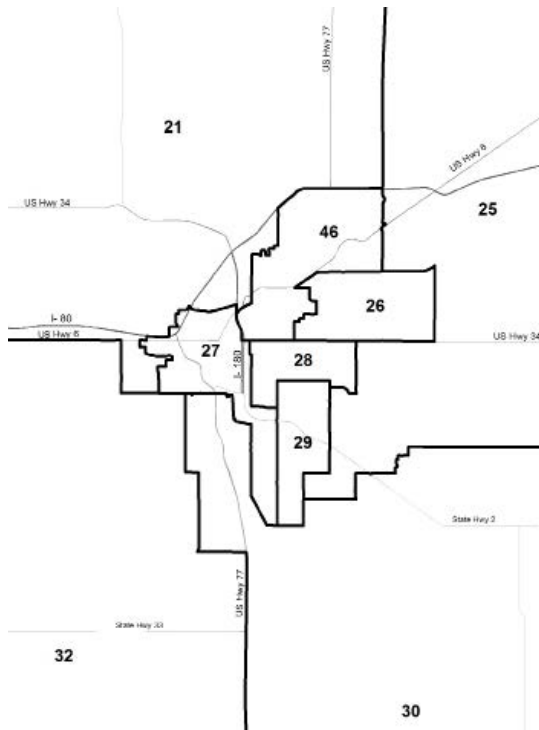
## *Legislator's Guide*

### LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT MAPS

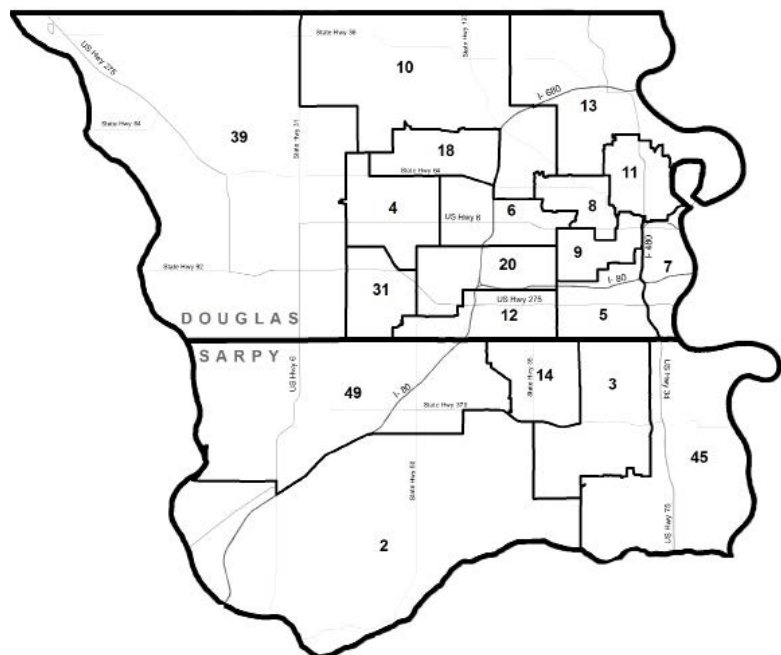
#### NEBRASKA



#### LINCOLN



#### OMAHA



## LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

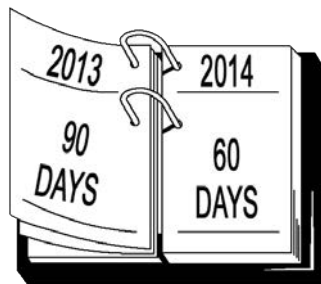
**(Refer to State Constitution, Article III, Section 10.)**

Until 1971, the Legislature met every other year. Then a constitutional amendment was adopted that requires you and your colleagues to meet annually.

Regular sessions of the Legislature begin at 10 a.m. on the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January of each year. In 2013, the Legislature will convene January 9.

The upcoming session, your first session, will be called the first session of the 103rd Legislature. The second session of the 103rd Legislature will begin in 2014. At the beginning of odd-numbered years, you and your colleagues elect the speaker and committee chairpersons.

In odd-numbered years, the Legislature meets for 90 working days; in even-numbered years, it meets for 60 working days. This usually means that during a “long” session, lawmakers adjourn for the year sometime in early June, while during “short” sessions they adjourn sometime during mid-April. The schedule, however, is determined by the Speaker of the Legislature. The length of a session cannot exceed either 60 or 90 days unless it is extended by a vote of four-fifths of all members (40).



### Presiding Officer/Lieutenant Governor

The lieutenant governor is the Legislature’s presiding officer, but votes only when the Legislature is equally divided.

The Legislature determines the rules of its proceedings and is the judge of the election,

returns and qualifications of its members. It also chooses its officers, including a speaker, to preside when the lieutenant governor is absent.

### Special Sessions

Between regular sessions, the governor may call the Legislature into a special session, or the Legislature may require the governor to call a special session, at the request of two-thirds of its members (33). Senators may consider only those matters specifically mentioned in “the call” for a special session.

### Expulsion of Members

No member can be expelled except by a vote of two-thirds of all members (33) elected to the Legislature and no member shall be twice expelled for the same offense.

### Legislative Officers

The legislative branch includes three officers: Clerk of the Legislature, Assistant Clerk of the Legislature and Sergeant at Arms. All of these officers are nominated by the Legislature’s Executive Board and elected by the Legislature to serve two-year terms. The Executive Board also appoints people to fill the positions of Legislative Fiscal Analyst, Director of Research, Legislative Auditor and Revisor of Statutes. The Office of Public Counsel (Ombudsman) is appointed by a two-thirds (33 members) vote of the Legislature from nominations submitted by the Executive Board. These people serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board, which supervises all services and employees of the Legislature.

### Legislative Rules

The Legislature adopts its permanent rules annually. Proposed changes to the rules are submitted to the Legislature’s six-member Rules Committee, one of the Legislature’s four select



committees. After permanent rules are adopted, a three-fifths (30) vote of the body is required to amend the rules. Legislative rules also can be suspended by a three-fifths vote.

Questions about parliamentary procedure during session should be directed to the presiding officer of the Legislature or to the Clerk. The Clerk of the Legislature serves as chief parliamentarian to advise the Legislature on questions about the rules and parliamentary procedure.

### **Quorum/Attendance/Excused Absences**

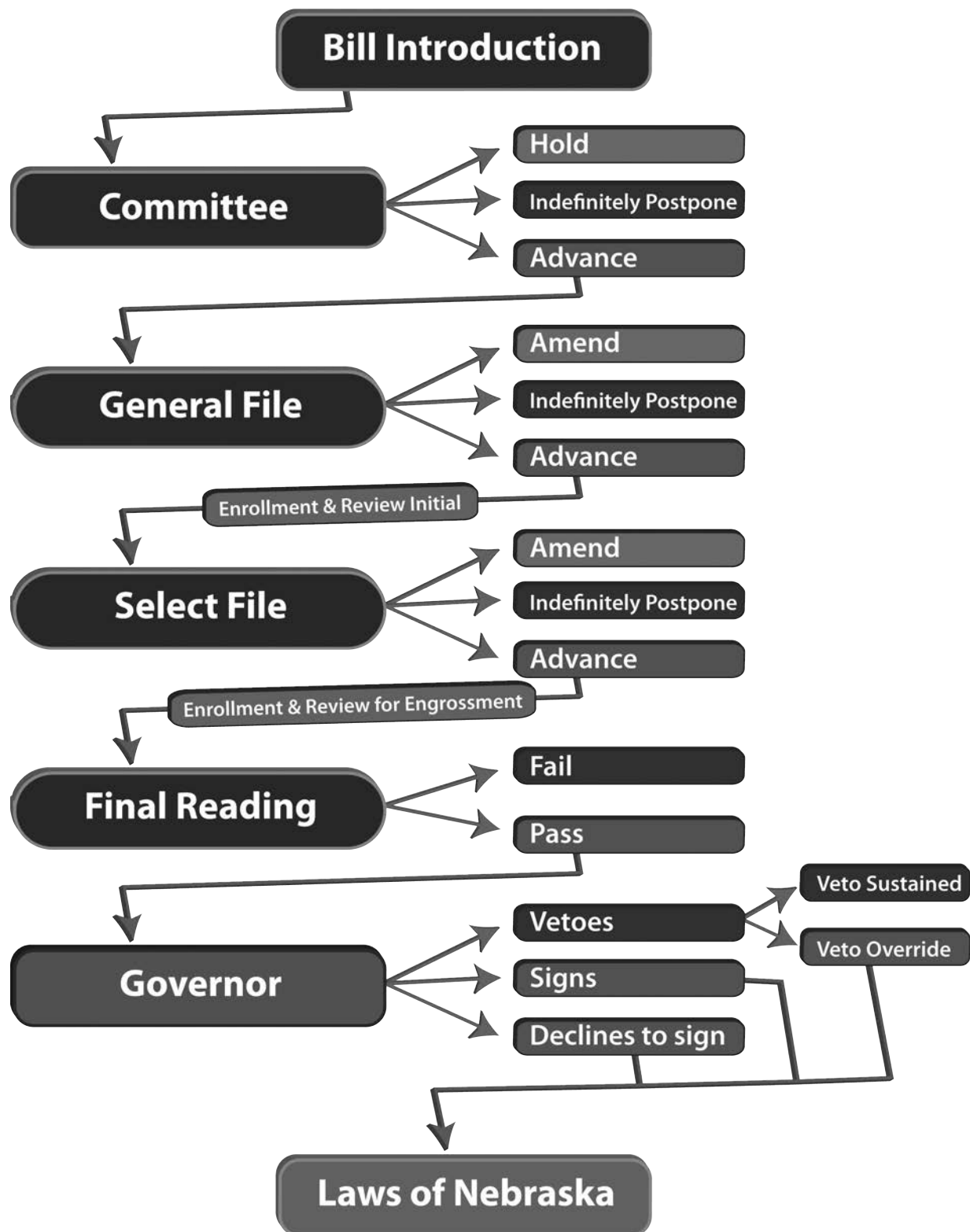
A majority of members (25) constitutes a quorum. Your attendance during the meetings of the Legislature and regular meetings of the standing committees on which you serve is required unless excused by the Legislature, the speaker or the committee chairperson.

If you want to record an excused absence, your staff should call 471-2303 (Journal Clerks' Office) before session convenes. Your staff should indicate whether you should be excused until you arrive or for the day. If the session has convened, have your staff call 844 (Journal Clerks' intercom phone in the chamber). If the Legislature is under call, you cannot be excused.

### **Call of the House**

By legislative rule, you or any of your colleagues may request a "call of the house." That means that each of you must indicate your presence on the voting board and remain seated during the call. At the time a motion is made for a "call of the house," the presiding officer orders the voting board to be cleared so that a vote may be taken.

## LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



The lawmaking process in Nebraska officially begins when you or your colleagues introduce a bill into the Legislature.

However, the process actually begins much earlier — when you first begin to formulate ideas for new laws. An idea for a new law may be suggested by anyone: concerned citizens, special interest groups, state agencies or the governor. The idea must be introduced by a senator to be formally considered by the Legislature.

Committees debate and propose amendments to bills, and the full Legislature has an opportunity to debate each bill at least two times before its final passage. You or your fellow senators may propose amendments to alter the bill at each stage of debate.

Here are the steps a bill must take before becoming a Nebraska state law.

First, you and your staff research a problem and study possible legislative remedies. As you already know, you may introduce a bill to create a new law, or to repeal or change an existing law.

Much of the research is done during the period between sessions called the interim. During this time, legislative committees study a variety of issues which have been outlined in interim study resolutions introduced by the Legislature during the previous session.

## Drafting

You take your idea for a new law to a bill drafter, who works with you to transform the idea into the proper legal form for a bill. Unlike some states, Nebraska requires that introduced bills contain only one subject.

## Introduction

Legislative rules require that most bills be introduced during the first 10 legislative days of the session. Certain exceptions apply, however. For example, appropriations bills or bills introduced

on behalf of the governor may be introduced after the first 10 days of the session.

In order to introduce a bill, you must file it with the Clerk of the Legislature. The Clerk reads the title of the bill into the record, as required by the state constitution, assigns it a number and prints copies of it for public and legislative use.

## Fiscal Note

The Legislative Fiscal Office prepares budget statements known as fiscal notes for each bill introduced. They contain three estimates of the monetary impact each bill would have if it became law. The three budget estimates are prepared by the Fiscal Office staff, the Governor's Budget Office and the appropriate state agency or local government entity.

## Public Hearing

The Reference Committee, which consists of the nine members of the Executive Board, decides whether bills will be referred to General File, or to one of the 14 standing committees. The Clerk of the Legislature prints a bill after it has been referred to a committee. With the exception of a few technical bills, most bills introduced into the Legislature must receive a public hearing by a legislative committee. Adequate public notice — defined by legislative rule — must be given before a public hearing is held.

## General File

General File is the first time the full Legislature has the opportunity to debate and vote on bills. At this stage, you and your colleagues consider amendments, which may be proposed both by committees and by individual senators. Many people consider General File to be the most crucial stage of the legislative process, because it is where most compromises are worked out through debate and amendment.

On General File, the Clerk of the Legislature reads the number and title of a bill and the name of the principal introducer as it comes up for consideration at this first stage of debate. Standing committee amendments are considered first. The introducer's amendments, if any, are considered next, after which the introducer may move to advance the bill and explain the legislation. Any other amendments or motions are considered next.

Bills are listed and considered on General File in the order in which they are reported from the standing committees, unless the speaker changes that order.

As with most legislative business, it takes a majority vote of the Legislature (25 votes) to adopt amendments, and to move a bill from General File to the next stage of consideration.

## Enrollment and Review

Commonly referred to as "E & R," enrollment and review is a process by which previously adopted amendments are incorporated into a bill, and the entire bill is checked for technical and grammatical accuracy.



## Select File

Select File is the second debating and voting stage. This step allows another opportunity for amendment, compromise and reflection. Bills on Select File may be indefinitely postponed or advanced to the next stage.

After Select File, bills are sent to E & R again to be rechecked. Bills then are reprinted for Final Reading.

## Final Reading

The Nebraska Constitution requires that before final passage all bills must be read aloud in their entirety by the Clerk of the Legislature. The Legislature may waive the final reading with a three-fifths vote. During this time, you must remain in your seat and staff is prohibited from being on the floor.

You may not amend or debate a bill on Final Reading, but you may move to return it to Select File for a specific amendment. Bills may not be voted on for final passage until at least five legislative days after the bill is introduced, and two legislative days after it is placed on Final Reading.

## Governor

After the Legislature passes a bill on Final Reading, it goes to the governor for consideration. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to decide what to do with a bill.

If the governor signs a bill, or declines to act on it, the bill becomes a state law. If the governor vetoes it, the bill is returned to the Legislature with objections.

The governor also has the right to disapprove or make specific reductions of figures on state budget bills. These reductions are known as line-item vetoes.

A vote of three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature will override a governor's veto or line-item veto.

**Effective Date**

Most bills passed and approved by the governor become law three calendar months after the Legislature adjourns sine die. However, bills may take effect before that date if they contain the emergency clause or an operative date. It takes a vote of two-thirds (33 members) of the Legisla-

ture to pass a bill with the emergency clause. If a bill is passed with the emergency clause, the bill takes effect the day after the governor signs the measure, or on the sixth day after passage if the governor does not take action on it.



## STANDING COMMITTEES

### Legislative Committee Structure

The hub of the legislative process is the standing committee system. As noted earlier, most bills are referred to one of the 14 standing committees where they are given public hearings. The committee members then determine whether to indefinitely postpone (kill) the bill or advance it to General File, with or without amendments, for full floor consideration.

Every two years, on the first day of each new legislature, the chairpersons of the various standing committees are elected by secret ballot. In addition to personal staff, most committee chairs are entitled to hire a committee clerk and a legal counsel or research analyst to perform the work of the committee. These committee staff members work for the chair but are available to committee members and others interested in aspects of issues that come before a committee for its consideration. The job descriptions for these positions are as follows:

### Committee Clerk

A committee clerk works under the general supervision of the committee chairperson and performs work involving clerking for a standing committee, secretarial services, administrative services, public relations, office management and other committee work as required. A committee clerk position is classified as a “pay grade D or E (senior)” position.

### Legal Counsel

A legal counsel works under the limited supervision of a committee chairperson. He or she performs and prepares legal research, bill and amendment drafting and analysis of legislation; coordinates committee activities; responds to inquiries concerning issues in assigned subject areas; and performs other

related work as required. A legal counsel position is classified as a “pay grade J or K (senior)” position.

### Research Analyst

A research analyst works under the limited supervision of a committee chairperson. He or she performs and prepares qualitative and quantitative research, bill and amendment drafting and analysis of legislation; coordinates committee activities; responds to inquiries concerning issues in assigned subject areas; and performs other related work as required. A research analyst position is classified as a “pay grade G, H, or J” position.

### Committee Selection Process

Members of these standing committees are chosen at the opening of each new Legislature, which begins and is organized in January of each odd-numbered year. A Legislature has a life of two years. The session that convenes in January of odd-numbered years is called the “first session” and the session that convenes in even-numbered years is called the “second session.” Senators chosen to serve on the various standing committees serve on those committees through both sessions.

Subject to approval by the full Legislature, the Committee on Committees nominates senators to serve on all standing committees. Nine of these committees have eight members. The Appropriations Committee has nine members. Three standing committees have seven members, and one committee has six members. Most senators serve on two standing committees depending upon the committees assigned. Senators placed on the Appropriations Committee serve only on that standing committee, which meets daily.

On the opening day of each new Legislature, standing committee chairpersons are elected by a majority vote of secret ballots cast by all members.

The Nebraska Legislature's 14 standing committees meet on regularly scheduled days, but committee hearings may be held on different days to accommodate testifiers.

<b>2013 STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING DATES</b>						
<b><u>Committee</u></b>	<b>103rd Legislature <u>Members</u></b>		<b><u>Meeting Dates</u></b>			
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>T</b>			
<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Banking, Commerce &amp; Insurance</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>			
<b>Business &amp; Labor</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>M</b>				
<b>Education</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>			
<b>General Affairs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>M</b>				
<b>Government, Military &amp; Veterans Affairs</b>	<b>8</b>			<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Health &amp; Human Services</b>	<b>7</b>			<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Judiciary</b>	<b>8</b>			<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>	<b>8</b>			<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Nebraska Retirement Systems</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>at the call of the chairperson</b>				
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>8</b>			<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Transportation and Telecommunication</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>			
<b>Urban Affairs</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>T</b>			

There are two types of committees other than standing committees.

First, there are four select committees:

- Committee on Committees
- Enrollment and Review
- Reference
- Rules

Secondly, there are eight special committees:

- Building Maintenance (81-185)
- Education Commission of the States (79-1504)
- Executive Board of the Legislative Council (50-401.01)
- Legislative Performance Audit (50-1204)
- Legislature's Planning (50-1402)
- Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact (74-1601)
- Midwestern Higher Education Compact Commission (85-1302)
- State-Tribal Relations Committee (50-445)

## Committee Assignment Combinations

The following list shows various combinations of committees upon which you may serve without resulting in conflicting meeting times. At the same time, it also allows each of you a committee meeting every afternoon, Monday through Friday. It should be noted that this list is based on the assumption that the various committees will meet the number of times per week and on the days indicated on the attached sheet.

### **Agriculture**

#### **Meets Tuesdays**

A member of this committee also may have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Business and Labor
- b. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
General Affairs
- c. Health and Human Services  
Business and Labor
- d. Health and Human Services  
General Affairs
- e. Judiciary  
Business and Labor
- f. Judiciary  
General Affairs
- g. Natural Resources  
Business and Labor
- h. Natural Resources  
General Affairs
- i. Revenue  
Business and Labor
- j. Revenue  
General Affairs

### **Appropriations**

#### **Meets daily**

This committee meets daily. A member may have no other assignments except to those committees which do not have regular meetings.

**Banking, Commerce and Insurance**

Meets Mondays and Tuesdays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs
- b. Health and Human Services
- c. Judiciary
- d. Natural Resources
- e. Revenue

**Business and Labor**

Meets Mondays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Agriculture
- b. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Urban Affairs
- c. Health and Human Services  
Agriculture
- d. Health and Human Services  
Urban Affairs
- e. Judiciary  
Agriculture
- f. Judiciary  
Urban Affairs
- g. Natural Resources  
Agriculture
- h. Natural Resources  
Urban Affairs
- i. Revenue  
Agriculture
- j. Revenue  
Urban Affairs

**Education**

Meets Mondays and Tuesdays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs
- b. Health and Human Services
- c. Judiciary
- d. Natural Resources
- e. Revenue

**General Affairs****Meets Mondays**

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Agriculture
- b. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Urban Affairs
- c. Health and Human Services  
Agriculture
- d. Health and Human Services  
Urban Affairs
- e. Judiciary  
Agriculture
- f. Judiciary  
Urban Affairs
- g. Natural Resources  
Agriculture
- h. Natural Resources  
Urban Affairs
- i. Revenue  
Agriculture
- j. Revenue  
Urban Affairs

**Government, Military and Veterans Affairs****Meets Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays**

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Agriculture  
Business and Labor
- b. Agriculture  
General Affairs
- c. Urban Affairs  
Business and Labor
- d. Urban Affairs  
General Affairs
- e. Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- f. Education
- g. Transportation and Telecommunications



**Health and Human Services**

Meets Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Agriculture  
Business and Labor
- b. Agriculture  
General Affairs
- c. Urban Affairs  
Business and Labor
- d. Urban Affairs  
General Affairs
- e. Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- f. Education
- g. Transportation and Telecommunications

**Judiciary**

Meets Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Agriculture  
Business and Labor
- b. Agriculture  
General Affairs
- c. Urban Affairs  
Business and Labor
- d. Urban Affairs  
General Affairs
- e. Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- f. Education
- g. Transportation and Telecommunications

**Natural Resources**

Meets Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Agriculture  
Business and Labor
- b. Agriculture  
General Affairs
- c. Urban Affairs  
Business and Labor
- d. Urban Affairs  
General Affairs
- e. Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- f. Education
- g. Transportation and Telecommunications

**Nebraska Retirement Systems**

Meets at the call of the chairperson

This committee meets at the call of the committee's chair. Membership on this committee does not prevent a member from having any other assignments.

**Revenue**

Meets Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Agriculture  
Business and Labor
- b. Agriculture  
General Affairs
- c. Urban Affairs  
Business and Labor
- d. Urban Affairs  
General Affairs
- e. Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- f. Education
- g. Transportation and Telecommunications

**Transportation and Telecommunications**

Meets Mondays and Tuesdays

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs
- b. Health and Human Services
- c. Judiciary
- d. Natural Resources
- e. Revenue

**Urban Affairs****Meets Tuesdays**

A member of this committee may also have one of the following:

- a. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
Business and Labor
- b. Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
General Affairs
- c. Health and Human Services  
Business and Labor
- d. Health and Human Services  
General Affairs
- e. Judiciary  
Business and Labor
- f. Judiciary  
General Affairs
- g. Natural Resources  
Business and Labor
- h. Natural Resources  
General Affairs
- i. Revenue  
Business and Labor
- j. Revenue  
General Affairs

**Subjects Assigned to Committees of the Nebraska Legislature****Agriculture**

- 1. Crop Development; exports; prices, commodity programs and boards; marketing
- 2. Livestock; brands; development; liens; health; auction markets
- 3. Warehouses; public grain warehouses; grain storage
- 4. Department of Agriculture; Nebraska State Fair Board; county fairs
- 5. Farming and ranching; corporate ownership
- 6. Agricultural products; research, development, and utilization; foods; milk, eggs
- 7. Fertilizer; feeds; agricultural chemicals
- 8. Weather modification
- 9. Cooperatives
- 10. Weights and measures
- 11. Weeds
- 12. Lodging; eating facilities; Nebraska Pure Food Act
- 13. Pests; animals
- 14. Seeds
- 15. Pet shops

**Appropriations**

1. Appropriations bills; support of state government; capital construction; Senators' salaries; salaries of constitutional officers; deficiency appropriations; appropriations for special purposes or projects
2. Create special funds; exchanges between or disbursements from various funds
3. Bills increasing salaries of state employees; bills to change state contributions to state employees group health insurance
4. Changing distribution of certain taxes (e.g., the cigarette tax)
5. Bills containing substantive program provisions within the jurisdictions of other committees – which also contain provisions for major appropriations

**Banking, Commerce and Insurance**

1. Banking (Financial Institutions)
  - a) Banks; banking practices; branch banking; auxiliary tellers; organizations
  - b) Department of Banking and Finance; administration
  - c) Credit Unions
  - d) Building and loan associations
  - e) Loans; interest; consumer credit; Nebraska Installment Sales Act
  - f) Industrial loan and investment companies
  - g) Public funds; investment; deposit
  - h) Public bodies; authorities; issue bonds
2. Insurance
  - a) Insurance companies; agents and brokers; guaranty associations
  - b) Department of Insurance; administration
  - c) Policies; coverage; types of insurance; actions; liability
  - d) Risk management
  - e) Health Maintenance Organization Act
3. Commerce; related acts; miscellaneous
  - a) Uniform Commercial Code; trust administration; partnerships; corporations; business trusts; Securities Act; business entities
  - b) Real estate; Real Estate Commission; abstracters; deeds
  - c) Financial acts; Mortgage Finance Fund; economic development; NIFA
  - d) Commercial development; trade; exports
  - e) Miscellaneous; accountancy; warranties; franchises; itinerant merchants
  - f) Research and Development Authority Act; venture capital

**Business and Labor**

1. Workers' compensation; Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court
2. Unemployment compensation
3. Labor and employment relations; Commission of Industrial Relations; fair employment practices
4. Health and safety regulations; labor conditions

5. Claims against the state
6. Miscellaneous; purchase American-made goods; disability compensation for state employees; plant closings; job training; boiler inspection
7. Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act; Wage and Hour Act
8. Elevators; Conveyance Safety

**Education**

1. School districts; organization; reorganization; tuition; powers; offices; transportation
2. Schools; programs; compulsory education; special education; handicapped; gifted; drivers' education
3. Teachers; employees
4. Post-secondary education; state colleges and universities; vocational schools; community colleges; governing boards
5. State aid; school funds; lands
6. State Board of Education; Department of Education
7. Miscellaneous; NETV; public radio; private and parochial schools; educational service units

**General Affairs**

1. State Electrical Act
2. Liquor
3. Gambling; bingo; lotteries; horse racing; pickle cards
4. Cemeteries
5. Libraries
6. Specific conveyances
7. Miscellaneous; adopt official state items; trade names and practices; safety detection devices; rates for legal notices; auction houses; holidays; unfair sales; franchises

**Government, Military and Veterans Affairs**

1. County government and officers; counties, townships
2. Elections
3. Other political subdivisions; special districts
4. State government; departments; agencies, boards and commissions; constitutional officers; employees; legislature
5. Political campaigns and finance; Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act; lobbying; political contributions
6. Corrections; jails; Department of Correctional Services
7. Law enforcement; State Patrol; police
8. Miscellaneous; recognition days; unclaimed property; public meetings; public lettings; standards for public buildings
9. Administrative rules and regulations
10. Military and Veterans Affairs; National Guard; veterans aid; veterans homes; County Service Committee; civil defenseService Committee; Civil Defense



11. Apportionment; redistricting

**Health and Human Services**

1. Public Health Areas

- a) Hospitals; nursing homes; homes for the aged; health facilities; certificate of need
- b) Mental health regions; commitment; alcoholism and drug programs
- c) Professional and occupational licensing; boards
- d) Medical assistance
- e) Emergency medical care; services; ambulances
- f) Department of Health and Human Services
- g) Children; diseases; maternal and infant care
- h) Housing and building standards
- i) Miscellaneous; vital statistics; rural and local health; generic drugs; Radiation Control Act; Asbestos Control Act

2. Welfare-related

- a) Public Assistance; administration
- b) Children; foster care; child care; support; placement; adoption
- c) Aging
- d) Miscellaneous; community action agencies

**Judiciary**

- 1. Courts; judges; procedures; judicial districts; powers; jurisdiction; juvenile code
- 2. Criminal code; crimes and punishments
- 3. DUI
- 4. Criminal procedure; crime victim's reparations
- 5. Civil procedure; civil law
- 6. Probation; parole
- 7. Real property; conveyances; liens; condemnation; eminent domain; landlords and tenants
- 8. Marriage and divorce
- 9. Child support; visitation rights
- 10. Miscellaneous; liens; liability; guest statutes; tort claims; civil rights; Uniform Arbitration Act; obscenity; abortion
- 11. Immigration
- 12. Handgun permits; possession of guns

**Natural Resources**

1. Water-Related

- a) Ground and surface
- b) Rights
- c) Wells
- d) Irrigation; districts
- e) Flood control

- f) Drainage
- g) Department of Natural Resources
- h) Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Act; Erosion and Sediment Control Act
- 2. Public Power-related
  - a) Public Power Districts
  - b) Power Review Board
  - c) Other utilities; electric co-ops
  - d) Oil and gas
- 3. Natural Resources Districts; Natural Resources Commission
- 4. Environment Areas
  - a) Hazardous waste; underground storage; oils and fuels; combustibles
  - b) Litter reduction; recycling; drink containers
  - c) Department of Environmental Quality; Environmental Quality Council
  - d) Pollution; groundwater; Environmental Protection Act; chemigation
  - e) Air pollution
- 5. Energy; Energy Office
- 6. Recreation Areas
  - a) Hunting; fishing; trapping; game farming
  - b) Game and Parks Commission
  - c) Parks, recreation areas; recreation roads
  - d) Miscellaneous; endangered species; wildlife damage (compensation for)
  - e) Boating
- 7. Ethanol Authority and Development Act – petroleum products

**Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee**

- 1. Public Employees Retirement Board
- 2. Nebraska Investment Council
- 3. State Employees Retirement System
- 4. County Employees Retirement System
- 5. Deferred Compensation Plan
- 6. School Employees Retirement System (State)
- 7. Omaha School Employees Retirement System
- 8. Judges Retirement System
- 9. State Patrol Retirement System
- 10. Spousal Pension Rights Act

**Revenue**

- 1. Sales and use tax; rates of; setting of; exemptions; items to be taxed; collection; delinquent taxes
- 2. Income tax
- 3. Property tax; homestead exemption; administration; valuation of property
- 4. Motor fuels tax; special fuel; aircraft fuel; liquefied gas
- 5. Miscellaneous taxes; cigarette; liquor; insurance premiums; pari-mutuel; inheritance; highway

- bonds; franchise; severance
- 6. Department of Revenue; State Tax Commissioner
- 7. Employment Expansion and Investment Incentive Act; Employment and Investment Growth Act; Community Development Assistance Act; all proposals containing tax credit or incentives regardless of the remaining subject matter
- 8. Miscellaneous; Local Option Tax Control Act; Local Option Revenue Act; state aid; revenue forecasting

### **Transportation and Telecommunications**

- 1. Motor vehicle-related
  - a) Driver licensing
  - b) Registration and titles
  - c) Rules of the road
  - d) Size and weight; equipment
  - e) Department of Motor Vehicles
- 2. Highways-related
  - a) Highways and bridges
  - b) Roads
  - c) Department of Roads
  - d) State Highway Commission
- 3. Railroads-related
  - a) Grade crossings
  - b) Transportation safety districts
  - c) Railroad equipment
- 4. Common Carriers-related
  - a) Pipelines
  - b) Commercial vehicles
  - c) Telephones; telecommunications
  - d) Public Service Commission
- 5. Driving with a revoked license; accidents

### **Urban Affairs**

- 1. Cities and villages; all classes; particular classes; organization; powers and services; special districts and authorities; officers and employees; funds; annexation and zoning; planning
- 2. Sanitary and Improvement districts
- 3. Metropolitan Utilities District; Business Improvement District Act
- 4. Housing authorities
- 5. Community antenna television service
- 6. Handicapped parking

Source: Legislative Research Report #89-25, September 1989

Updated September 2010, based on recommendations from the Revisor of Statutes

## LEGISLATIVE DIVISIONS AND STAFF

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This section is designed to acquaint you with the five divisions of the Legislature, their staff and the services they provide. The Executive Board supervises all services and employees of the Legislature.

The divisions are listed below:

Bill Drafter and Revisor of Statutes .....Page 31

Clerk of the Legislature.....Page 35

Legislative Fiscal Office .....Page 45

Public Council (Ombudsman).....Page 51

Legislative Research Office.....Page 54

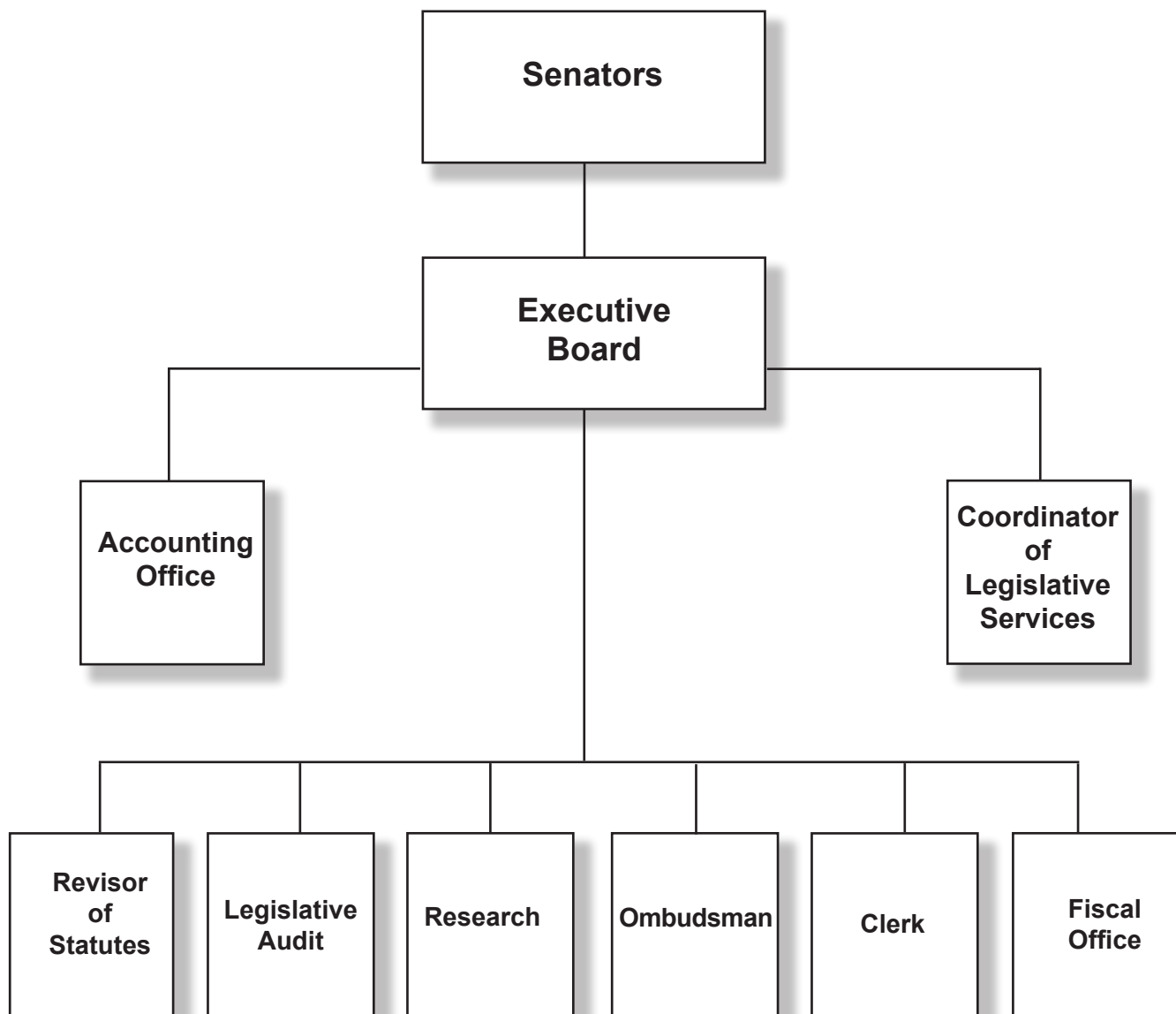
Legislative Audit Office .....Page 58

In addition, the Accounting and Budgeting Office and the Coordinator of Legislative Services work directly under the auspices of the Executive Board.

Accounting and Budgeting Office .....Page 29

Coordinator of Legislative Services .....Page 60

## LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



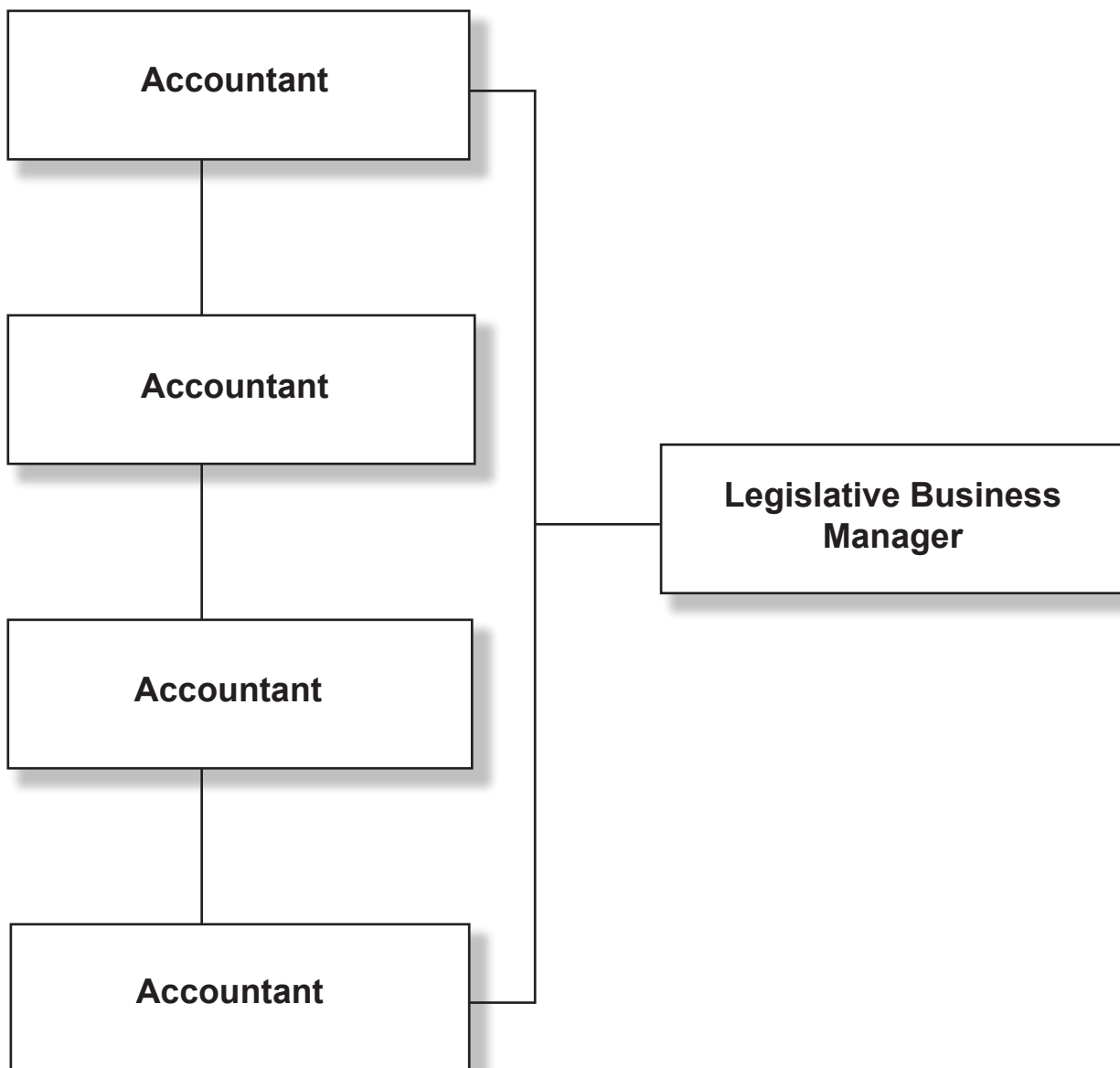


## ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETING OFFICE

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**Legislative Business Manager:** Diane Nickolite  
**Room:** 1010  
**Phone:** 471-2226  
**Fax:** 471-6091  
**E-mail:** [dnickolite@leg.ne.gov](mailto:dnickolite@leg.ne.gov)

### Organizational Chart

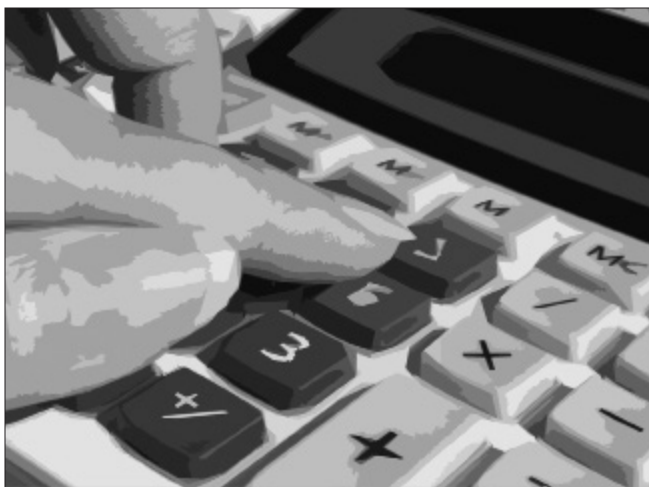


## Office Functions and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Accounting and Budgeting Office include: handling all personnel benefits and payroll; calculating salary eligibility for all staff; maintaining employee legislative histories; paying all bills, including per diems and expense vouchers; managing travel program requests; depositing accounts receivable monies; ordering supplies; purchasing equipment and furniture; coordinating communication equipment changes; preparing the Legislature's tax report for submission to the Nebraska Department of Revenue; and preparing the Legislative Council's budget under the direction of the Executive Board.

## Supplies

You may obtain your office supplies in the Accounting and Budgeting Office. Items desired in large quantity or unusual items should be ordered in advance. A letter must be written to the Executive Board Chairperson for out-of-the-ordinary or costly supplies. Quarterly, the Accounting Office will provide to you a supply sheet indicating supplies used by your office. This supply sheet should be signed by you and returned to the Accounting Office.



## Loaner Equipment/Furniture

The Accounting and Budgeting Office will loan to offices hand-held dictaphone equipment, calculators and a paper shredder. The Transcriber's Office (part of the Clerk's Office) will loan transcription equipment. Requests for office furniture must be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services. Requests for special items may require that a letter be sent to the Executive Board chairperson for approval.

## Repairs

Telephone issues should be reported to the Coordinator of Legislative Services. For computer questions, contact the Technology Center.

## Personalized Stationery, Envelopes, Business Cards

Place your requests for personalized stationery, envelopes and business cards with Vicki Buck in the Clerk of the Legislature's Office.

## Telephones

Calling cards are distributed to you through the Accounting and Budget Office. An itemized list of calls from your office will be distributed monthly to you for your approval. Very specific procedures are outlined in the Legislature's Policy Manual regarding long-distance calls and the process for reviewing telephone billing statements.

## Senators' Pay, Benefits, Staff

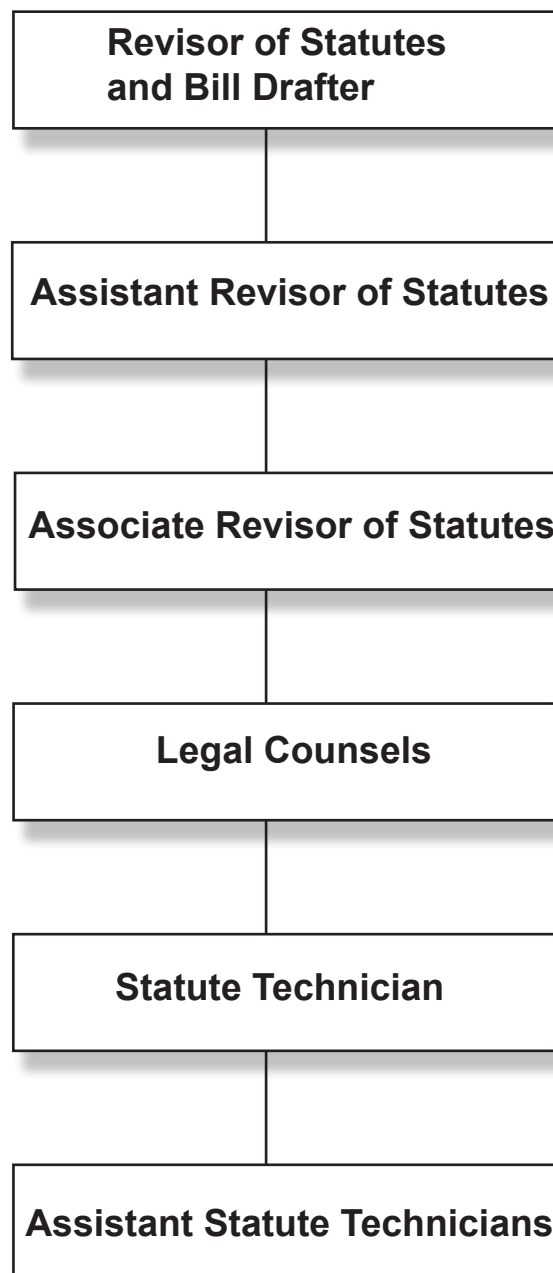
Information about your pay, benefits, expense reimbursements and staffing appear in separate sections. If you have any questions about these areas, please direct them to the Accounting Office staff.

## BILL DRAFTER/REVISOR OF STATUTES

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**Revisor of Statutes:** Joanne Pepperl  
**Room:** 358  
**Phone:** 471-2225

### Organizational Chart



## The Office of Revisor of Statutes

The Office of Revisor of Statutes is created by **section 49-701** as part of the Legislative Council. The Revisor of Statutes is appointed by and under the supervision of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council. (See **section 50-401.01.**)

The Legislative Council has the duty to establish and maintain a complete and efficient bill drafting service for the purpose of aiding and assisting members of the Legislature and the executive departments of the state in the preparation of bills, resolutions, and other measures and in drafting them in proper form. (See **section 50-402.**)

The responsibilities of the Revisor of Statutes and the Bill Drafter are combined in one office. The office is comprised of bill drafters (who are lawyers) and statute technicians under the direction of the revisor. The statute technicians computerize and proofread the materials that are processed through the office.

There are 12 major functions of the Revisor of Statutes/Bill Drafter.

1. Draft legislation proposing changes to the statutes and the Constitution of Nebraska.
2. Prepare amendments to legislation.
3. Provide legal services for the Enrollment and Review (E&R) Committee.
4. Issue a supplement volume at the end of each legislative session.
5. Reissue the permanent volumes of statutes as needed.
6. Maintain a computer database of the statutes.
7. Prepare Revisor's bills.
8. Prepare and issue the general index to the statutes.
9. Review the language of initiative and referendum measures for form and draftsmanship.

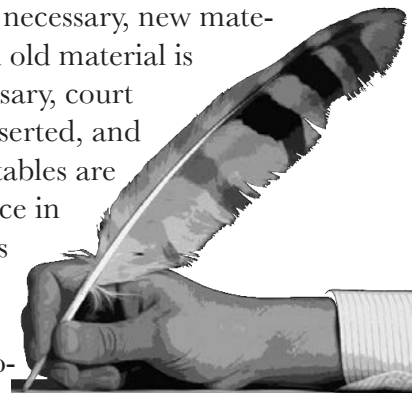
10. Provide staff support to the Reference Committee.
11. Write "one-liner" descriptions of bills used in referencing documents, agenda preparation, notices of introduced legislation, and other legislative documents.
12. Serve as a liaison to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

All work necessary to accomplish these functions, other than the actual printing of the supplements, reissues, and index, is done within the office.

All legislative bills and all proposed constitutional amendments are placed in correct form by a bill drafter. Some of these proposals are written by others before the request is submitted to the office, but many are completely written by a bill drafter. Most amendments are also prepared by a bill drafter.

The work of E&R consists of reviewing bills and certain resolutions for needed amendments as they progress through the legislative process, and incorporating adopted amendments into Final Reading and Engrossed copies of the legislation.

After each legislative session, sections within the bills that were passed are compiled in numerical order by statute number for the supplement. New laws are assigned section numbers, catchlines are written for new material and modified for old material if necessary, new material is indexed and old material is reindexed if necessary, court annotations are inserted, and various reference tables are compiled. Guidance in correlating statutes which have been amended by more than one bill is pro-



vided in **sections 49-769 and 49-770**.

Reissuance of a permanent volume of the statutes involves incorporating the laws enacted since the volume was last reissued and is governed by **section 49-765**.

In preparing supplements and reissues, lengthy proofreading and editorial changes are necessary. The Revisor of Statutes is authorized to, among other things, make harmonizing changes, omit certain obsolete and unconstitutional matter, and correct manifest clerical errors. (See **section 49-705**.) The printing of these volumes is governed by **sections 49-617, 49-702, 49-704, 49-707, 49-765 and 49-767**.

The Revisor of Statutes maintains a computer database of the statutes. The database is updated after each regular legislative session and as otherwise needed. The updated statutes are placed on the Legislature's web site as soon as possible after the legislative session has adjourned.

Prior to each legislative session, the Revisor of Statutes is required to provide the Executive Board a list of obsolete and unneeded statutes which could be repealed. (See **section 49-771**.) Bills repealing these sections and proposing needed corrections to the statutes are known as Revisor's bills. (See **sections 49-705 and 49-771 and Legislative Rule 5, section 3(a)**.)

The Revisor of Statutes Office issued the most recent general index to the statutes in 2011. It is reissued periodically. A supplemental index is included in the statutory supplement if no general index is scheduled that year.

Since 1995, the Revisor of Statutes is required to review initiative and referendum petitions. (See **section 32-1405**.) When the Secretary of State receives an initiative or referendum petition, he or she transmits the text to the Revisor of Statutes. The Revisor reviews the proposed measure and can suggest changes. The sponsor(s) of the measure can accept or reject the suggested changes.

Since 2002, the Revisor of Statutes serves as staff for the referencing committee in referencing bills and interim studies.

**Sections 49-901 to 49-905** create the Commission on Uniform State Laws. The state commission works with the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws to promote uniformity in state laws on all subjects where uniformity is desirable and practicable. Commissioners participate in drafting acts on various subjects and endeavor to secure enactment of the approved acts in the various states. **Section 49-901.01** provides that the Revisor of Statutes is to serve as a commissioner.

## Bill Drafting Procedures

The office has prepared a drafting manual that provides a detailed outline of drafting issues, policies, and procedures. It also contains many examples. A copy will be provided upon request.

The procedures for a request for a new bill are included here.

Each request goes through a series of steps designed for quality control, usually in the following order, which vary in length according to the nature of the request, the amount of background research performed by the requester, the overall workload of the office, and similar factors.

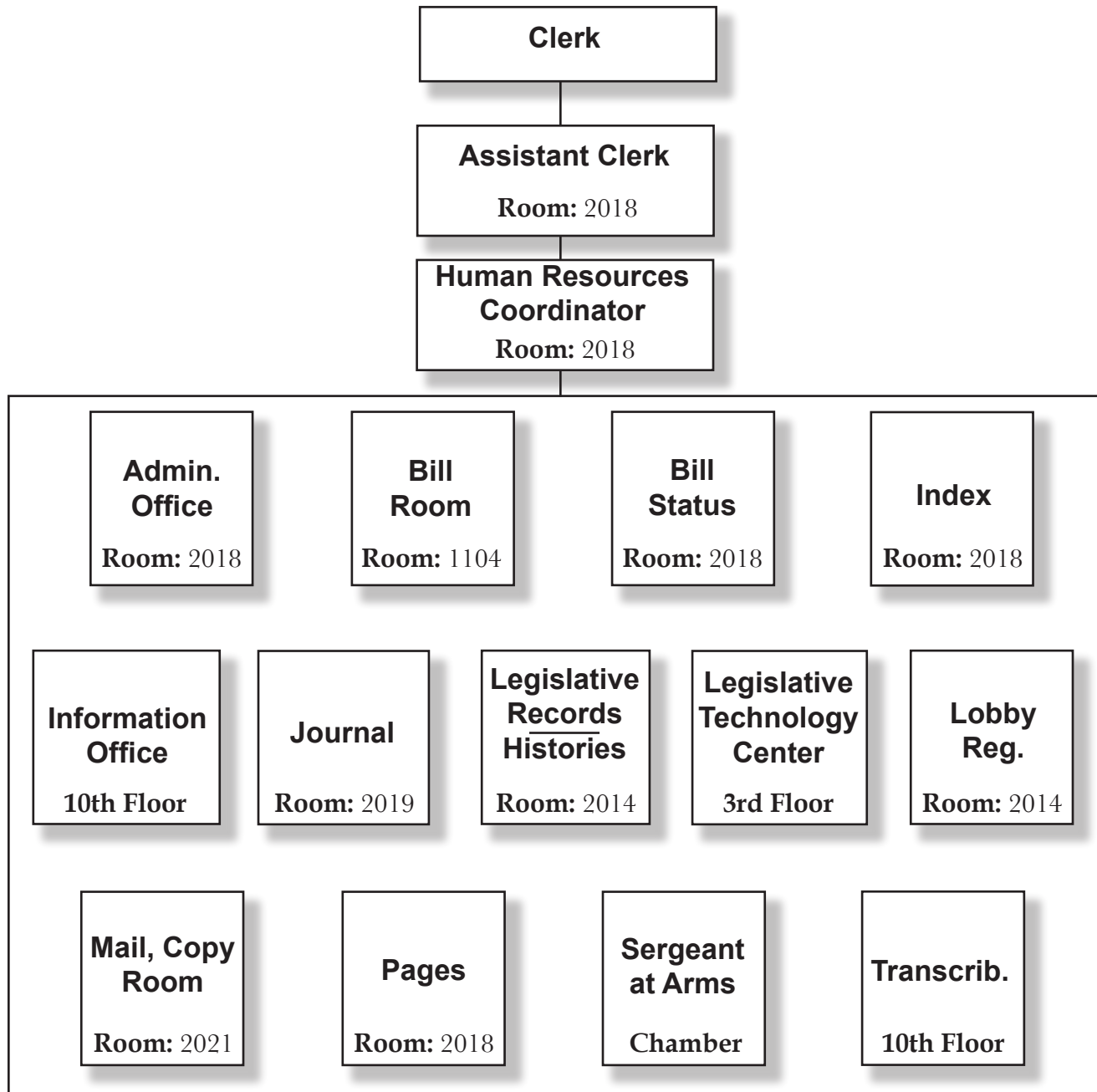
1. A request arrives in the office and is assigned a number.
2. The request is assigned to a bill drafter.
3. The bill drafter reads through the request, checks to see if any statutes should be amended, checks relevant constitutional and other provisions as time permits, and may request additional information.
4. The bill drafter has needed statutes copied, marking changes on the copies, writing new material if necessary, adding special clauses (e.g., emergency), numbering sections, and drafting the title.
5. The request is submitted to the statute technicians to be computerized. Requests are computerized in numerical order as completed by the bill drafters.
6. A request document is created in the computer by calling up statutes to be amended, entering appropriate commands for changes, and typing in new material. A copy of the request is printed.
7. The copy of the request is proofread by two statute technicians against the bill drafter's work product.
8. The request is read by a second bill drafter for content, possible conflicts with other statutes, constitutional questions, technical form, etc. and discussed with the first bill drafter.
9. If necessary, corrections are made and a new copy of the request is printed.
10. The bill drafter delivers a copy to the requester and alerts the requester to any problems discovered during the drafting process. The requester is expected to read the request in order to ensure that it accomplishes what was requested before the final version, commonly called a three-part, is prepared.
11. If necessary, the request is revised, changes are made on the computer, and a new copy is delivered to the requester. This step is repeated as often as necessary until the requester is satisfied with the request.
12. The requester approves preparation of a three-part or decides not to proceed further.
13. The three-part is delivered to the requester.



## CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE

**Clerk:** Patrick J. O'Donnell  
**Room:** 2018  
**Phone:** 471-2271

### Organizational Chart



## **The Clerk**

The Clerk of the Legislature's Office is the administrative arm of the Legislature. The Clerk is responsible for the overall management of the office.

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all constitutional, statutory and policy positions for the Legislature are followed.

The Clerk assists in the overall administration of the Legislature through his work with the Speaker's Office, Executive Board, and other executive and judicial branch agencies.

## **The Assistant Clerk**

During the legislative session, the Assistant Clerk is responsible for keeping official records of bills, amendments, resolutions and other legislative records. He also drafts a number of these documents. He should be contacted regarding the introduction of bills or amendments, the filing of motions and notices, or for reviewing other official communications.

The Assistant Clerk, who like the Clerk is an attorney, offers legal and parliamentary advice to the presiding officer, to legislators and to legislative staff. He drafts legislative rules and assists in ensuring all constitutional requirements for the processing of legislation are met.

The Assistant Clerk may assist and offer staff support to special committees created to address issues that pertain to the legislative branch of government. He is responsible for assisting in the implementation of Legislative Council policy adopted by the Executive Board.

In addition, the Assistant Clerk helps manage and supervise the Clerk's staff. He is directly responsible for the Legislative Technology Center, Unicameral Information Office and Sergeants at Arms.

## **Human Resources Coordinator**

The Human Resources Coordinator provides support to the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk and assists in the administration and management of the office.

The Human Resources Coordinator receives persons seeking employment with the Legislature; retains applicants' resumes for one month; and provides copies of those resumes to senators, upon request, when they are filling positions. She receives the Legislative Rooms Request Forms and schedules rooms.

The Human Resources Coordinator serves as a liaison for requests for services pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. She is a member of the Legislative Council Safety Committee.

The Human Resources Coordinator coordinates the orientation session for new administrative assistants every two years. She serves as the Legislative Council's Affirmative Action Officer and the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator.

## **Bill Status Clerk**

The Bill Status Clerk performs the following tasks:

- Compiles information on bills, constitutional amendments and resolutions referred to committee. This information includes bill titles and introducers' names, as well as dates and Journal cites for the following: date of introduction; reference report; committee hearing; committee action; proposed amendments; legislative floor action; and other pertinent information on each bill and resolution.
- Creates a summary sheet from the Journal at the end of each day the Legislature is in session. The summary sheet lists the bills and resolutions numerically and indicates any action that has taken place. The

summary sheet is designed to help staff maintain black books. (The black book is a convenient record of legislative actions taken on bills and resolutions.)

- Assembles the chronology of bills, constitutional amendments and resolutions referred to committee which is bound in the Legislative Journal at the end of session
- Prepares an Interim Hearing Schedule listing all committee hearings with dates, times and topics on a weekly basis during the interim
- Maintains, prepares and updates the Legislature's Policy Manual

## **Division Executive Assistant**

The Division Executive Assistant works directly with the Clerk of the Legislature, as well as with the Assistant Clerk. He or she handles correspondence and schedules appointments.

The Division Executive Assistant also works with the Governor's Office and receives letters regarding gubernatorial appointments, the signing and/or vetoing of legislation and any other matters directly related to the Legislature. All attorney general opinions also are received by the Division Executive Assistant.

Other responsibilities of the Division Executive Assistant include:

- issuing office keys to legislative staff
- coordinating issuance of access/identification cards for legislative staff and news media
- issuing authorization for use of state cars
- maintaining the legislative social calendar
- maintaining a current file of all state agency reports received
- maintaining copies of the daily agenda, worksheet and summary sheet for the public

- scheduling individuals to serve as Legislative Chaplain
- coordinating senators' expense verifications
- assisting with page orientation/training activities
- maintaining a list of and coordinating individuals to serve as Doctor of the Day
- selling copies of the Nebraska Blue Book
- preparing weekly legislative hearing schedule

The weekly schedule of committee hearings is prepared for publication the last legislative day of the week during session. The schedule will not be available until after the Legislature adjourns for the day. The schedule is available on tables in front of the Clerk's office and the Bill Room.

## **Legislative Records Historian**

The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature keeps the official records of all debate and action taking place in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.

You, your staff and other individuals come to the Clerk's Office to determine why certain legislation was introduced. The answer to that question is often found in what is known as a "legislative history."

A standard history of a bill or statute includes the following information: committee records (committee hearing transcripts, introducer's statement of intent and the committee statement); floor debate transcripts; and on request, the bill and exhibits.

A history can be requested over the phone, by letter or by e-mail. It can be viewed in the Clerk's Office or copied and mailed to the person requesting the history. A bill number and year or statute number is helpful to find the appropriate legislative history. Microfilm records begin as early as 1937 for committee hearings and 1961

for floor debate. Transcripts of public hearings and floor debate are available on our website beginning with the 2007 session.

A history request is processed as quickly as possible depending on the length of the history and the number of requests. A legislative history costs 15 cents per page, plus tax and postage. There is no charge to senators, staff or state agencies.

The Records Historian also:

- coordinates the printing of bills and amendments
- processes and distributes adopted amendments to bills, fiscal notes and committee statements
- trains and assists committee clerks
- provides support for the chamber automation system.

## Journal Clerks

The Journal Clerks produce the daily **Legislative Journal**, which is consolidated at the end of the legislative session into a bound Legislative Journal. The following indexes are added to the bound volume of journals at the end of the session:

- Chronology of bills and resolutions referred to committee
- Introducers of bills and resolutions
- Bills and resolutions heard by committee
- Summary of final legislation
- General index
- Subject and section indexes to bills and resolutions introduced

Other publications produced by the Journal Clerks are:

- **Worksheet** — shows the status of every bill and resolution referred to committee at the end of each legislative day
- **Roster** — includes information about the membership, committees, officers and

employees of the Legislature

- **Rule Book** — contains all legislative rules
- A booklet of the carry-over legislation at the beginning of each even-numbered year
- The **Nebraska Constitution**
- A booklet of the interim study resolutions

Miscellaneous items ordered through the Journal Clerks are:

- Senators' stationery
- Envelopes
- Business cards
- Scratch pads
- Thank you cards

The Assistant Journal Clerk receives daily journal records from the Principal Journal Clerk, who compiles the information as action takes place on the legislative floor.

The Assistant Journal Clerk takes these records and creates the daily Journal. She also assists with all other duties and responsibilities within the Journal Clerk area during the session and provides special assistance to other areas of the office during the interim.

### Excused Absences:

1) **Call 471-2303** (Journal Clerks' Office) before session convenes. You or your staff should indicate whether you should be excused until you arrive or for the day.

2) **Call 844** (Principal Journal Clerk's intercom phone number in the chamber) if the session has convened. If the Legislature is under call, you cannot be excused.

## Lobby Registration Office

A list of registrations and quarterly filings for all lobbyists and their principals is available in the Lobbyist Registration Office in Room 2014. Lobbyists and principals are required by law to file

reports of receipts and expenditures quarterly.

Each quarter, reports of receipts and expenditures are prepared for senators, their staff and the media. These reports are available to the public by request for 15 cents per page.

## Index Clerk

The Index Clerk performs the following tasks:

- Prepares a subject matter and statutory section index to all bills and resolutions for distribution and/or inclusion in the Session Laws and Legislative Journal
- Prepares a subject index to interim studies and resolutions
- Receives and responds to inquiries from staff and the public regarding current and past legislation, statutes, bills, and motions and amendments on bills
- Keeps official records of bills, amendments, resolutions and other legislative records during the legislative session
- Maintains the legislative voting system and enters the daily agenda in the computer, which provides the information shown on the display boards in the legislative chamber
- Maintains the governor appointments database
- Coordinates referencing of bills and resolutions
- Maintains the bill file, including all bills, resolutions, amendments and motions
- Produces a booklet of statutes about the Executive Board
- production of the Unicameral Update, a free, news print and online publication covering legislative activity
- production of the Nebraska Blue Book
- production of a variety of informational and educational publications and videos that explain the legislative process, provide information about the Legislature's members and assist citizens with getting more involved in the legislative process
- management of the design and content of NebraskaLegislature.gov, the Legislature's website
- management of the Warner Institute for Education in Democracy, the Legislature's civic education initiative
- maintenance of a digital photo library, including photos of senators, the legislative chamber, the capitol and committee hearings
- presentations to groups and organizations about the Legislature, its history and its process

## Nebraska Blue Book

The *Nebraska Blue Book* is the state's government reference manual, and it is published biennially in odd-numbered years.

The *Blue Book* contains constitutional, historical and statistical information about state government, as well as brief biographies and photos of elected officials.

The *Blue Book* is distributed free to all Nebraska schools and libraries, state agencies and some federal offices. Based on availability, a limited number of copies are provided to individual state senators and a copy is available for each legislative employee, if desired. *Blue Books* are exchanged with other states for their state manuals, which are placed in the Supreme Court Law Library. The *Blue Book* is available to the public for \$15 plus postage and tax per copy.

## Unicameral Information Office

The Unicameral Information Office provides a variety of informational, educational and media-related services to the Legislature and its constituents, including:



## Transcribers

Legislative transcribers transcribe verbatim all legislative activity, including floor debate and testimony presented at all session and interim committee public hearings.

Transcribers and the Legislative Records Historian coordinate requests for current floor debate and/or committee hearings.

Transcribers also coordinate and process rush orders from the legislative floor.

Transcribers print the final drafts of all committee hearings; proof and print final drafts of floor debate; help legislative staff as needed; assist in the maintenance of all recording and transcribing equipment; and supply tapes to committee clerks for committee hearings.

## Legislative Hot Line

During the legislative session, hot line staff will answer questions about the status of bills or requests for information from citizens calling the Legislative Hot Line.

The hot line operates from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. during the legislative session.

This service also is available to any person with hearing loss and/or a speech impairment.

### Legislative Hot Line (Session Only)

Lincoln area ..... 471-2709 V/TTY  
Other Nebraska areas..... 800-742-7456 V/TTY  
24-Hour Request Line..... 402-471-2877

## Legislative Bill Room

Paper copies of bills may be obtained in the Legislative Bill Room.

Bills are printed in different colors to represent individual steps in the legislative process. For example, bills on General File are printed on green paper; bills on Final Reading for the first time are printed on buff-colored paper; and amendments adopted by the Legislature are

printed on white paper. A booklet containing sample sheets of those colors is available at the Clerk of the Legislature's Office.

Binders located in the rear of the chamber are updated daily with all new bills, amendments, fiscal notes and journals.

Daily Legislative Journals, worksheets, agendas, resolutions, constitutional amendments, hearing schedules, one-line descriptions of bills, summary sheets and the *Unicameral Update* are also available during session. Copies of laws enacted in the previous 10 years are usually available on request.

A bill box service is offered for minimal charge to the public. The boxes are available for the daily pick up of journals, bills and slip laws. Each senator may have a box upon request.

## Page Supervisor

The Page Supervisor conducts the annual page orientation and training of legislative pages. The supervisor creates work schedules for the pages and helps answer lights when necessary.

During the interim, the Page Supervisor distributes mail, schedules pages for interim hearings and is responsible for the photocopier and fax machine.

## Pages

Pages, wearing vests, respond to senators' lights on the legislative floor and answer phone calls coming into the chamber.

They also prepare for hearings, run errands and serve coffee to senators during hearings, update journals and distribute agendas and worksheets to senators' desks in the chamber.

If you have a young constituent interested in becoming a page, he or she must fill out and submit an application to the Clerk's Office. A page applicant also is advised to request a letter of recommendation from his or her state senator.



Pages are selected in the fall. Pages must be high school graduates who are enrolled in a college or trade school with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale and be able to work 20 hours a week. They also must be able to work the same four-hour shift each day.

## Legislative Floor Procedures

Legislative access/identification cards are required for access to the chamber. Your staff should be in the chamber or on the floor of the Legislature only when you request their presence. Legislative staff should confer with the Sergeant at Arms and assistants to determine whether it is appropriate for staff to be on the floor.

When the Legislature is under call or on Final Reading, staff are prohibited from being on the floor.

## Sergeant at Arms

Wearing red jackets, the Sergeant at Arms and assistants are responsible for maintaining order when the Legislature is in session and also during public hearings. Their role is to ensure that rules and proper decorum are observed. They assist staff and lobbyists. When citizens visit the chamber, they provide information and assistance.



## Legislative Technology Center

The Legislative Technology Center (LTC) manages the Legislature's computer network and provides a variety of services to its users. Those services include:

- *Help Desk* — LTC responds to requests for assistance from senators, legislators' staff and legislative division employees. Those needing computer assistance should call 1-2234, and the call will be routed to the appropriate computer staff person. Help desk calls are prioritized according to urgency, but the center's goal is to resolve each problem as soon as possible. On a limited basis, the help desk responds to questions from state agencies and the general public regarding the features of the Legislature's public website.
- *Network and Systems Administration* — In its role as network administrator, the LTC installs hardware and software on the network, does troubleshooting of network problems, maintains an audit trail of network access for security purposes and monitors error conditions on the network. The center also is responsible for the installation and support of hardware and software purchased by the Legislature, the maintenance of backup copies of system configurations and the testing of new software releases. In addition, the center provides technical expertise concerning hardware and software purchases by the Legislature.
- *Training* — LTC's Help Desk staff provides training to senators and staff on computers and the software applications used within the legislative environment. Small classroom training and large group workshops are conducted throughout the year. Notice is provided by email. Those wishing to take a class are requested to sign up with the

help desk staff by calling 1-2234. Individualized instruction may be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Training packets for common tasks performed in this environment are available on the UniNet under the heading of Training/Help.

- *Application Development* — Legislative Technology Center analysts provide application development services for the legislative environment to support the creation of bills and supporting documents and the flow of electronic data in the chamber and between offices as needed.
- *Internet and UniNet Support* — LTC provides technical support to the development and maintenance of the Legislature's website and the UniNet. The Unicameral Information Office works with the Technology Center to create and update the Unicameral website and produce multimedia products to assist in the understanding of Nebraska's legislative process.
- *Other Services* — The voting board system in the legislative chamber is maintained and supported by the center. The center also provides access to select applications and data through the Legislature's local area network.

## Keys

Letters requesting office keys are to be given to the Clerk's Office in Room 2018. New staff must have a letter of authorization signed by their senator in order to be issued a key. Staff leaving employment in an office must turn their key in to the Clerk's Office.



## Access/Identification Cards

Access/Identification cards are issued through the Clerk's Office, Room 2018. The access/identification cards are produced with a photo by Capitol Security. Each legislative employee is required to have an access/identification card for access to the chamber during session. Cards are also required to enter the building after hours. Any person who leaves employment from the Legislative Council must turn in their access/identification card to the Legislative Accounting Office.

## Travel

Travel must be approved by the chairperson of the Executive Board or his or her designee. Forms must be submitted to the chairperson indicating destination, purpose and dates of such travel. Upon approval by the chairperson, the Clerk's Office will issue the necessary authorization for use of a state car.

Anyone who drives a state car must have completed the Defensive Driving Course. A refresher course must also be taken every five years. To register for either course, call the Clerk's Office at 471-2271.

## Mail

Legislative Council mail is distributed in Room 2021. Outgoing mail is processed and picked up by the state Central Mail Room staff at designated times.

Heavy mail should be marked 1st class in the upper left hand corner of the envelope, or it will be sent the most economical way. If you have questions about the most economical route, please ask.

Notification of incoming certified mail is placed in senators' boxes in Room 2021. (A senator's staff member may pick up special mail at the State Office Building, U.S. Post Office before 4 p.m.)

The words “Interoffice” or “Interagency” should be in the top right corner of an envelope, along with a State Capitol return address. Please drop this mail in the “Interagency” slot.

DAS policy regarding interagency mail is as follows: Unidentified interagency mail (without return address or identifiable sending-agency markings) addressed to senators and/or Legislative Council personnel, will be bundled and returned to the Materiel Division, DAS, to be opened and returned to the appropriate agency director, if discernible.

Please be sure to use complete return addresses. Rubber bands should be placed around bundles of mail and the number of pieces indicated on the top piece. Bundles of five envelopes or more do not need to be sealed. Please stack flaps open and place a rubber band around the stack. Single pieces must always be sealed. Please bundle thicker envelopes separately.

All mail must have a state return address, including stamped and interoffice mail. Please be sure that complete return addresses are used. If return addresses are missing or incomplete, the mail will not be processed.

All legislative mail must be processed through Room 2021. The two identified mail slots make mail sorting more efficient. Your cooperation in sorting metered and interagency mail will be appreciated. Personal stamped mail must be dropped in the slot in the mailroom on first floor, Room 1419. Personal stamped mail cannot be left in Room 2021.

**PRESORT** - Outgoing: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.  
(from Room 2021)

**NON-PRESORT** - Outgoing: 2:30 p.m.

**UPS, EXPRESS MAIL** - Outgoing: 2:00 p.m.

**U.S. MAIL** - Incoming: 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.

**INTERAGENCY** - Incoming: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.

## **Executive Board Postal Policy**

Each member of the Legislature will be allowed to mail 200 pieces on any one calendar day, not to exceed 1,000 pieces in any one calendar month.

Each standing committee chairperson, the Executive Board Chairperson and the Speaker of the Legislature will not be allowed to exceed 1,500 pieces of mail in any one calendar month. There will be no carryover for unused portions of the mail allotment.

The Clerk of the Legislature will notify you if you reach the maximum limit. If the maximum limit is reached, no more mail will be processed during that day or month. Please refer to the postal policy filed under Tab 16 of The Legislature's Policy Manual for more detailed information.

## **Photocopying Service**

A copy machine in Room 2021 is available to all senators and staff. A full-time key operator will assist you, if necessary, during the legislative session. Staff assistance is available during the interim. When copying assignments are large (20 copies of two or more pages), a copy requisition form should be filled out, and the work must be taken to the Quick Copy Center on the first floor, Room 1419. Copy requisition forms can be filled out and printed off from the Forms section of the UniNet. The yellow copy of the requisition that is returned with the print job must be provided to the Accounting Office, Room 1022.

Two black-and-white self-service copiers are available in Room 1421 for access after 5 p.m., on weekends and for large copy assignments. The

copiers have been programmed to use access codes. Please have your staff contact the Legislative Accounting Office in Room 1022 (471-2226) for instructions and access codes.

## Color Printer

A networked color laser jet printer is available through the Mail Room, Room 2021, for use by legislative employees. It is advised that no more than 60 copies of an individual color page be printed, and color copies should be limited to documents for committee hearings or floor handouts. When printing to the color printer from your office computer, select the Mail Room RICOH Aficio C820 DN PS printer option. Documents printed on the color printer will be placed in your mailbox by copy/mail room staff. If you have questions with regard to printer options and printer accessibility, please contact the Legislative Technology Center at 471-2234. If you have questions on printed materials, please contact the Mail Room at 471-2304.

## Scanning / PDF Documents

Senators and staff may have documents scanned or converted into PDF at any of the following scanning stations:

- Mail/Copy room on second floor (Room 2021)
- Bill room on first floor (Room 1104)
- Legislative Research on first floor (Room 1201)
- Legislative Technology Center on third floor (Room 359)
- Legislative Accounting office on first floor (Room 1010)
- Information Office on 10th floor (Call 1-2788 for access instructions)

## Fax

The Legislature's fax machine is located in Room 2021 and the fax phone number is 402-471-2126. Outgoing material may be faxed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. There is a 25-page limit on the number of pages that can be faxed at any one time.

The fax machine is not to be used to transmit copies of legislative bills. They should be mailed or can be accessed at our web site.

## Notary Public

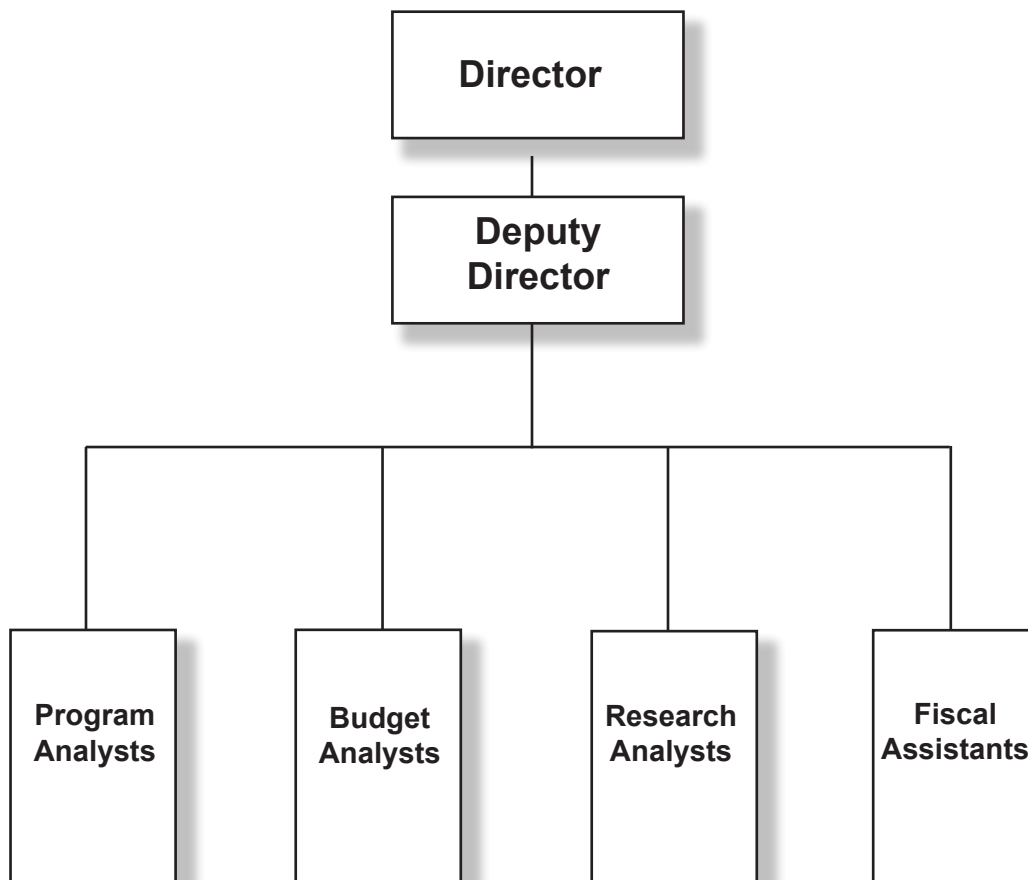
The Clerk of the Legislature's Office, Room 2018, provides a notary service to senators. Please call 471-2271 to ensure a notary is in the office should you need something notarized.

## LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE

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**Director:** Michael Calvert  
**Room(s):** 1003, 1005, 1007, 1009  
**Phone:** 471-2263 or 471-0059 (direct)  
**Fax:** 471-8280  
**E-mail:** mcalvert@leg.ne.gov

### Organizational Chart





## Legislative Fiscal Office Functions

The primary function of the Legislative Fiscal Office is to help the Legislature analyze state government financial and program issues. Specific roles and responsibilities in meeting this objective are defined in statute, linking office functions to the responsibilities of the Legislature's Appropriations and Revenue committees, and by the Rules of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.

During regular and special sessions of the Legislature, the Legislative Fiscal Office works under the direction of the Appropriations Committee to develop objective financial and program information and analysis of state agency budget requests and their operations. The information helps the Appropriations Committee develop budget recommendations and budget bills to be considered by the Legislature.

The Fiscal Office evaluates requests for appropriations, studies capital outlay requirements, plans for legislative appropriations, monitors control of funds and conducts oversight of the management and accomplishments of state government operations and aid programs.

Any legislator or legislative committee may request information and analysis from the Fiscal Office on specific issues and concerns.

## Fiscal Note

During legislative sessions, a primary responsibility of the Legislative Fiscal Office is to develop a fiscal note for each legislative bill introduced. (See Rule 5, Section 6).

A fiscal note identifies an estimate of the anticipated change in state or local government expenditures or revenue due to the bill's specific provisions. All bills must have a fiscal note filed with the Clerk of the Legislature and a copy of the note included in standing committee bill books before a bill's public hearing. Copies are also included in all legislative bill books, on the Legislature's UniNet and on the Legislature's

web site. Fiscal notes are revised as legislative bills are amended and advanced to the next stage of debate when such amendments alter revenue or expenditure estimates. Where legislation likely has an expenditure impact on the state, the fiscal note becomes the basis for drafting "A" bills (appropriations) that are companion bills to the substantive legislation. Specific requirements for fiscal notes and "A" bills are outlined in Legislative Rule 5, Section 6.

## Interim Work

During interims, the time between legislative sessions, the Fiscal Office provides staff support to the Appropriations Committee and other standing committees in their work with interim studies. General direction may be given by the Executive Board. In addition, the office independently conducts other research projects and helps individual senators find information on state government finances and agency functions.

## Revenue Forecasts

Under the direction of the Revenue and Appropriations committees, the Legislative Fiscal Office provides revenue forecasting information to the Legislature. Revenue forecasts generated by the Fiscal Office are reviewed by the Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board along with forecasts developed by the state Department of Revenue. The board's estimates become the basis for planning General Fund budget conditions for the current and next biennium. The Board meets twice in even-numbered years, three times in odd-numbered years.

## The Budget Process

The budget process is governed and guided



by provisions of the Nebraska Constitution, state statutes and the Rules of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature. Citations are included in the following description. Other aspects of the process have evolved over time to provide for a comprehensive, orderly budgeting function. The Rules, primarily Rule 8, address details of the legislative process. The rule also embodies, in Section 4, a process authorized by the Legislature for standing committee review and activity in formulating appropriations recommendations. This alternate process in Section 4 has been pursued to a limited degree generally focusing on one or two agencies or issues. The following discussion does not integrate the alternate process since it has not been used extensively.

## Summary

The following is a summary of the typical milestones and processes leading up to authorization of a full biennial (two-year) budget, which is enacted during regular legislative sessions, held in odd-numbered years (the long, 90-day session).

**July 15** — The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) issues forms and instructions to be used by state agencies for their budget requests. The Director of the Legislative Fiscal Office may suggest revisions, changes or additions to the forms before distribution. The budget instructions include a section developed by the Legislative Fiscal Office that restructures the agency budget request into a budget base (a specific percentage of current appropriations) plus a series of prioritized decision/spending packages, above the base level, up to the total request. The base level generally is some percentage less than 100 percent. The material supplements the standard, detailed line-item, fund account by budget program structure (RRS 81-1113 and 81-113.01).

**September 15** — Agency budget requests are normally due in DAS Budget by this date. The Budget Office requires submission of the official request via a web-based request system, which is available to the Fiscal Office. Budget requests may include personnel cost increases for items or issues that are subject to negotiations with employee bargaining units. Generally, these costs are wage rate changes and other changes to compensation rates, but may also include costs associated with benefits, such as health insurance. As these rates become known, costs are adjusted through the budget process, usually early in the legislative session (RRS 81-1113).

**September to January** — From the time of the submission of budgets, in September, to the first week of the legislative session, fiscal office staff analysts devote their time to understanding the requests of all agencies, boards and commissions, questioning agencies, and preparing briefing documents to be used later during the staff review phase with the Appropriations Committee. Budget requests are voluminous and detailed; the analyst must isolate the key issues embodied in the request, analyze alternatives and summarize their analysis. The analysis is presented in a standard format that conveys details of what has changed in the request versus current or prior years' spending authorization. DAS Budget analysts similarly are engaged in conducting their own review during this time, working with the governor and staff toward formulating the budget recommendation of the governor.

In October, the Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board (NEFAB) will provide General Fund revenue estimates for the current and ensuing two fiscal years, which become the initial revenue targets for the forthcoming biennial budget cycle.

**Early Session** — In odd-numbered years the governor is required to submit a budget proposal



by January 15, except that in the first year of office a new governor may submit a proposal on or before February 1. The budget recommendation comes as a bill or bills, and there may be additional explanatory material included, such as a budget book or other handouts. Typically, the budget bill(s) are introduced by the Speaker of the Legislature at the request of the governor. Appropriations bills routinely are referred to the Appropriations Committee. Substantive bills that are instrumental to the governor's budget recommendation are referred to the standing committee having subject matter jurisdiction. Such substantive bills may or may not be offered at the same time as the appropriations bill(s) and are not subject to the January 15 deadline. During the first ten days of the legislative session, other bills are being introduced by senators. Some of these bills will have financial impacts on the state if passed and may require an appropriation to ensure implementation as planned (RRS 81-125 to 81-126).

**January and February** — The Appropriations Committee meets with Fiscal Office staff to review and discuss the staff analysis of each agency budget request. The initial objective is to develop a preliminary recommendation and report to be submitted to the Legislature 20 to 30 legislative days after the governor's budget submission (Rules of the Nebraska Legislature, Rule 8, Section 2). The Appropriations Committee, after staff reviews, prepares a preliminary report of funding levels considered for each agency and an overall analysis of the spending capacity of state government. These preliminary figures are based on current revenue forecasts, tax rate assumptions and compliance with the statutory reserve requirement. The Preliminary Report and the levels of appropriation estimated therein become the basis of discussion during subsequent public hearings with state agencies and other interested

parties. During this time, standing committees (including the Appropriations Committee) are conducting hearings on the substantive bills referred to them. An integral part of the material available during the hearing is a fiscal note, produced by the staff of the Fiscal Office. The fiscal note is an estimate of the financial impact of the legislation, inclusive of expenditure and revenue impacts (Rules, Rule 5, Section 6). The note becomes the basis for estimating what appropriation may be necessary if the bill becomes law.

The NEFAB meets in late February to revise forecasts made in October.

**March** — The Appropriations Committee conducts public hearings on the budget during this time. Hearings notices are published in the Legislative Journal, listed by agency and bills referred to the committee. Agencies, interest groups and the general public are given the opportunity to comment regarding the preliminary recommendation of the committee, agencies' requests, the governor's recommendation or any new issues or items of request not yet before the committee. Fiscal staff monitor the hearings and are not active participants in testimony. During this time, other committees are reporting bills that have had hearings to the floor. New appropriations bills, companions to substantive bills, having the same number but designated with an "A" following the number, are also appearing. These are "A" bills (appropriations) that accompany the substantive bill and provide for the necessary spending authority to implement the legislation (Rules, Rule 5, Section 6). "A" bills may be introduced at any time and generally are considered immediately following each stage of debate of the substantive bill. However, it is not unusual for a bill to advance to Select File before the "A" bill is introduced — it is not the preferred mode of operation, but practical limits in bill drafting, analyzing amendments and refining cost estimates some-

times cause the delay.

As provided in Rule 5, Section 4, the Appropriations Committee may introduce enabling legislation that relates to the appropriations recommendations in the Preliminary Report required in Rule 8.

**April and May** — Immediately following the public hearings the Appropriations Committee meets to review all preliminary decisions, information obtained during the hearings and any other information brought to its attention. By this time, the impact of negotiated wage rates and benefits are known, or the range of costs sufficiently narrowed to allow an estimate. For about two weeks, the committee meets to complete a recommendation to be offered to the full Legislature. Fiscal staff help review all information. Once finalized, the recommendation is summarized into a budget book and other supplementary material for distribution on the legislative floor. Most importantly, fiscal staff write the budget bill or bills to be offered, or if the governor's bill or bills are to be used, amendments are drafted. The committee has until the 70th legislative day during a long session to place budget bills on General File. If the 70th day deadline is not met according to the rules, the governor's bills are to be considered. During a short session, the deadline is the 40th legislative day (Rules, Rule 8, Section 5). Typically, more than one bill embodies the Appropriations Committee recommendation. One large bill appropriates most state funds for operations and state aid. A second bill appropriates constitutional officer's salaries. A third is required for legislator's salaries.

A fourth bill typically is offered to make appropriations for capital construction projects. Another bill may be introduced for deficit appropriations (i.e. adjustments to appropriations previously authorized for the current year). It is not unusual for this bill to be considered early in the session, well before other appropriations bills are on General File, since these adjustments may be emergencies that apply to the current year, and time left in the fiscal year is short.

Other bills also may be offered, such as substantive law changes that implement some aspect of the committee recommendation or authorize fund transfers.

Appropriations bills are exempt from the 10-day limit on introduction of new bills (Rule 5, Section 4). The Appropriations Committee recommendations may be embodied in new bills or existing bills referred to the committee and reported to the floor of the Legislature with or without amendments. Once the bills have been placed on General File, a financial status report for the state General Fund is published to accompany the daily agenda. Shortly before the budget recommendation reaches the floor, the NEFAB meets in late April, making final revisions to General Fund revenue estimates. These become the final revenue targets guiding the budget process in a long session. The status report is produced by the Fiscal Office and is intended to show the probable spending limits given the assumptions embodied in the status such as tax rates, revised revenue forecasts and the committee's budget recommendation. The status lists each bill, by stage of debate, that has a General Fund cost impact. From this document it can be determined how much of the funds available are used by the committee recommendation, what funds remain and what total spending can be accommodated within the statutory reserve requirement. The status illustrates financial conditions for the biennium for which the budget applies plus the two following years for planning purposes. Though the Legislature is only considering the first two years for appropriations, simulating impacts for two additional years provides useful information on the state's ability to sustain future obligations. Prior to the initial release of the financial status that is attached to the agenda, the Appropriation and Revenue Committees meet as required by rule (Rule 8, Section 7) to agree upon estimates used in the planning years.

In a short legislative session, the NEFAB does not meet in April, thus the February estimates provide final revenue estimates in even-numbered years.

**Floor Action**

The appropriations bills, as offered by the Appropriations Committee which constitute their budget recommendation, are processed much like other bills once they arrive on the floor of the Legislature. On General File, committee amendments (if any) are taken up first followed by other amendments as filed. All other bills having a General Fund expenditure or a General Fund revenue loss are held on Final Reading and may not be read until the appropriations bills, as offered by the Appropriations Committee, pass. By rule, the Legislature is to pass appropriations bills by the 80th day in a long session or the 50th day in a short 60-day session (even-numbered years). One exception, during the short session, is that other bills may be read after the 45th day even though appropriations bills have not been passed. There is no penalty for not passing appropriations bills as provided by rule, other than the holding of bills during a long session. Though it is desirable to comply, circumstances such as volume of amendments, length of debate and full discussion of appropriations matters can extend passage of the appropriations bills beyond the prescribed deadlines (Rules, Rule 8, Section 5).

**Emergency Clause**

Appropriations bills almost always carry the emergency clause, thus requiring 33 votes for passage on Final Reading. This is invariably true of deficit bills since the changes affect the current fiscal year, and if the bill passed with fewer votes, it would render the appropriation meaningless since the effective date of the appropriation would occur after the end of the current fiscal year. On very rare occasions fewer votes can suffice where expenditures are delayed into the next fiscal year or the appropriations in the bill are small in comparison to the total appropriation to a program.

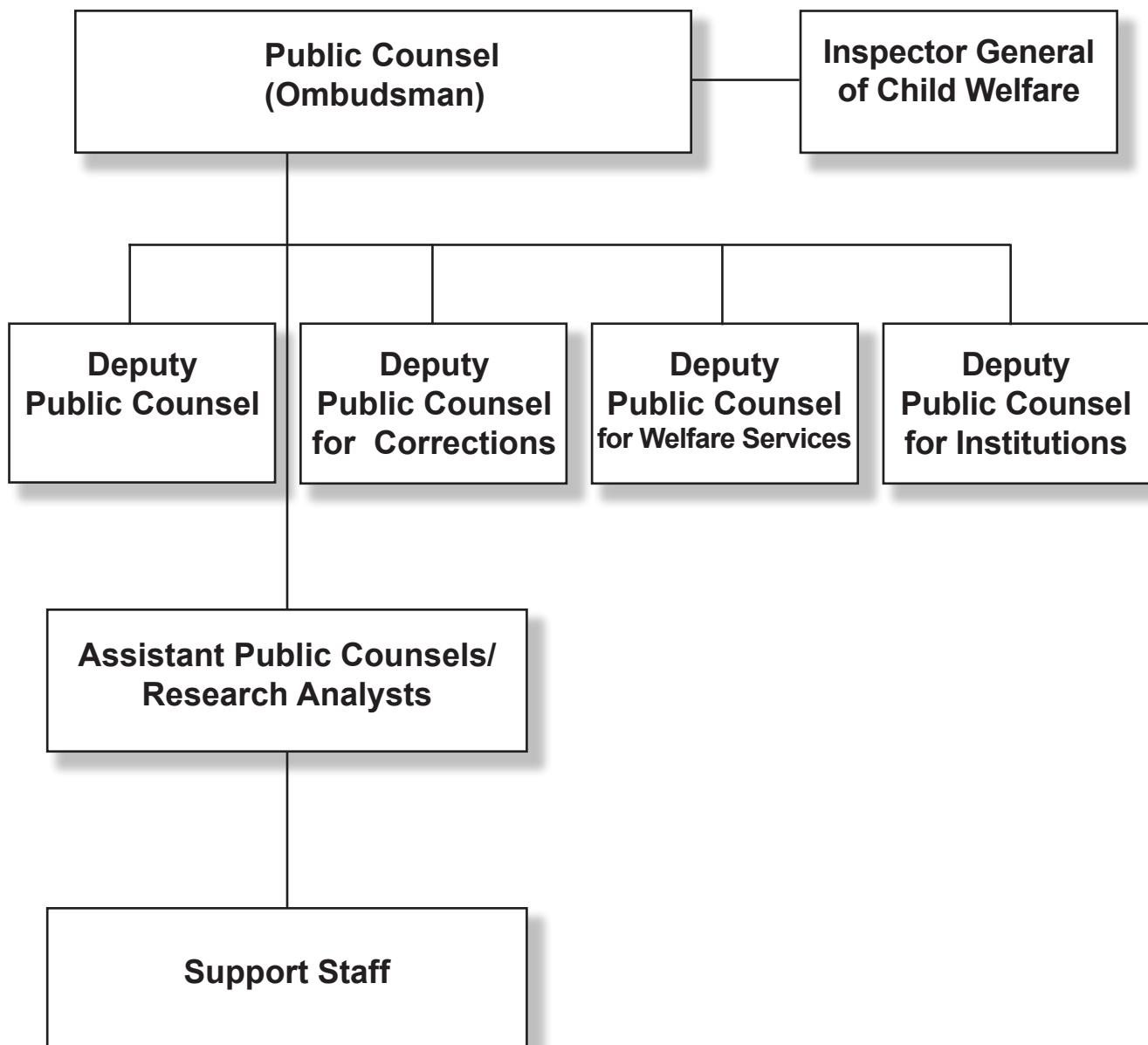
**Late May** — Once appropriations bills have passed and are sent to the governor, the governor has five calendar days, excluding Sunday, to sign, not sign (but the bill takes effect), veto in total or line-item veto items of appropriation (Nebraska Constitution, Article IV, Section 15). Within one day of the return of appropriations bills to the Legislature with line-item vetoes, the Appropriations Committee must report on the impact of the vetoes and may offer a motion to override the total or part of the line-item vetoes. Subsequent motions may then be offered by the members of the Legislature (Rules, Rule 6, Section 14). The constitutional requirement for a veto override is 30 votes. All final valid appropriations ultimately enacted take effect July 1 of the designated fiscal year or, if passed without the emergency clause, three calendar months after the end of the legislative session. Deficit bills making adjustments to current year appropriations with the emergency clause are effective immediately on passage (Nebraska Constitution, Article III, Section 27).

**Short Sessions** — Relevant differences with a short session are noted above. Since a short session occurs in the middle of a biennial, two-year period, appropriations already are authorized for the following fiscal year. Consequently, the volume of issues and dollar value of decisions typically is less, though this will vary because of then-current fiscal conditions. The Appropriations Committee is also able to concentrate more time on certain issues that are of greatest concern and interest. Obviously time lines are different, but most of the above elements are part of a short session budget process, compressed into a period that ends with the Legislature's adjournment, typically by mid-April.

## **PUBLIC COUNSEL (OMBUDSMAN)**

**Public Counsel (Ombudsman):** Marshall Lux  
**Room:** 8th Floor, State Capitol  
**Phone:** 471-2035  
**Toll Free Phone:** 800-742-7690  
**Fax:** 471-4277

### **Organizational Chart**



## **Functions of Public Counsel (Ombudsman)**

The Public Counsel, or Ombudsman, investigates and seeks informal resolutions of citizens' miscellaneous complaints involving administrative agencies of state government and local jail facilities.

The Ombudsman's Office is a service the Legislature provides to citizens who encounter problems in their dealings with state agencies. (The jurisdiction of the office does not include the courts, the Legislature, the governor and his or her immediate staff, political subdivisions or federal government entities, but does include complaints involving local jail facilities.) The powers of the Ombudsman's Office may be viewed as a delegation and specialization of the general oversight functions of the Legislature.

The investigatory powers of the Ombudsman's Office are broad, including freedom of access to agency records and facilities. Those investigative powers are complemented by the many years of experience that the Ombudsman's Office has had in working with state agencies. If an Ombudsman's investigation discloses that a citizen has been treated improperly by a state agency, then the office works with the agency involved to resolve the complaint through appropriate corrective action.

In the process of dealing with citizen complaints and recommending corrective action, the activities of the Ombudsman's Office also effect substantive improvements in the policy and procedures of the agencies under its jurisdiction.

## **Ombudsman for Corrections**

The staff of the Ombudsman's Office includes a Deputy Public Counsel for Corrections, who is primarily responsible for investigating prison/jail-related complaints. Complaints involving correctional issues are a specialized area,

a fact the Public Counsel Act recognized by creating the position of a deputy who would be particularly skilled and experienced in handling complaints in that area. Senators frequently refer complaints received from inmates and inmates' families to the Ombudsman's Office for action by the Deputy Public Counsel for Corrections.

## **Ombudsman for Welfare Services**

The staff of the Ombudsman's Office also includes a Deputy Ombudsman for Welfare Services, whose job it is to investigate and resolve complaints arising from the administration of the state's welfare services system. The person holding this position has expertise in the area of welfare programs and welfare law and is particularly experienced in dealing with complaints having to do with children and the family setting. Senators are encouraged to refer any complaints involving welfare programs (Aid to Dependent Children, food stamps, Medicaid, general assistance, etc.) and any complaints involving state wards (Child Protective Services, foster homes, removal of children from their homes, etc.) to the Deputy Ombudsman for Welfare Services.

## **Ombudsman for Institutions**

The staff of the Ombudsman's Office includes a Deputy Public Counsel for Institutions, who is to specialize in dealing with issues that relate to non-correctional state institutions, including the Regional Centers, Beatrice Developmental Center and the state-operated Veterans Homes. The Deputy Public Counsel for Institutions also has an involvement in investigating certain complaints of persons receiving community-based behavioral health services from regional behavioral health authorities.



## Information and Referral Service

Besides handling complaints, the Ombudsman's Office also provides general information about state government to the public. Broad exposure to the operation of state government and direct access to various agencies enable the Ombudsman's Office to provide citizens with information that they may otherwise have difficulty finding. The Ombudsman's Office also can be a referral service in those instances where it is presented with a complaint that is not under the jurisdiction of the office.

## General Studies

The Ombudsman's Office also has the authority to initiate or participate in general studies that may enhance knowledge about, or lead to improvements in, the way state government administrative agencies function. In performing this role, the Ombudsman's Office has initiated general inquiries into a wide variety of subjects concerning state government administration. The Ombudsman's Office may also participate in interim studies in cooperation with other legislative divisions and senators' staff.

## Inspector General of Child Welfare

The Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare was created to assist the Legislature in providing legislative oversight of the state's child welfare system. It is the Inspector General's job to conduct detailed investigations of complaints, problems, and issues arising from the operation of the state's child welfare system, and periodically to make reports on his or her findings and

recommendations to the Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee. The Inspector General position is seen as a way to enhance accountability and facilitate reform in the child welfare system, and to that end the Inspector General has been given jurisdiction to investigate all state and private agencies that serve children as a part of the child welfare system.

## Assistance to Senators

The Ombudsman's Office handles about 2,400 cases annually and has experienced a dramatic increase in its caseload in the last several years.

Most of the Ombudsman's cases are matters brought directly to the office by citizens making complaints. However, many of the Ombudsman's cases also come from senators who ask the office to help investigate and resolve complaints and fill requests for information that senators receive from their constituents. In this way, senators are able to bring the considerable expertise of the Ombudsman's Office to bear in the resolution of constituent problems. This approach also enables senators and their constituents to take advantage of the investigatory skills and powers (access to records and facilities, etc.) of the Ombudsman's Office.

If you would like the help of the Ombudsman's Office, you may either ask us to help your staff resolve constituent problems or you or your staff may simply refer your constituents to the Ombudsman's Office. Naturally, if you make such referrals, the Ombudsman's Office will advise you of any action taken.

## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH OFFICE

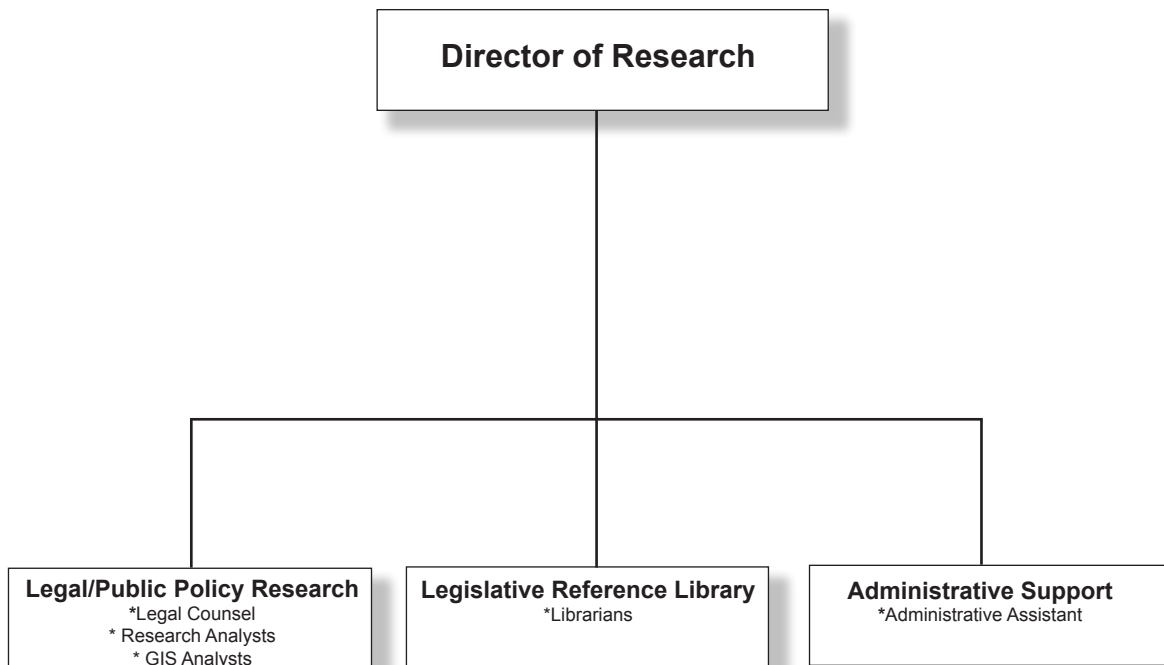
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**Director of Research:** Nancy Cyr

**Room:** 1201

**Phone:** 471-2221

### Organizational Chart





The Nebraska Legislature appoints its Director of Research under the authority of Neb. Rev. Stat. sec. 50-4010.01. First created in 1937, the Legislative Research Office has two major areas of responsibility: legal and public policy research for legislators and staff, and maintaining the Legislative Reference Library.

## Research

### Legal and Public Policy Research

In addition to the director, the research office employs a legal counsel and research analysts who, together with the director, conduct legal and public policy research for the Legislature. The research staff responds to questions submitted by senators' offices.

During the legislative session, research conducted by the office generally is of a short-term nature and designed to assist senators and their staffs as they begin to draft bills and amendments, respond to constituent questions, and prepare for committee testimony, debate on an issue, or discussion with various interest groups. Practically speaking, the office serves as an extension of each senator's office and can be called on to provide research assistance when a senator or his or her staff lacks either the time to dig into the issue or the expertise in the area under consideration.

Examples of research requests submitted to the office include:

- Do any other legislatures exempt their records from their state public records laws?
- What are the state sales tax rates imposed in states surrounding Nebraska?
- Do you have information regarding the history of interim studies in Nebraska?
- Can you provide a summary of the provisions of the Nebraska Administrative Procedure Act?
- Have there been any bills introduced during the last 15 years to change or elimi-

nate the motor vehicle tax?

During the interim, the research office staff focuses on longer-term projects. The staff participates in interim studies and works on other in-depth special projects.

### Reports

The research office annually prepares and publishes a summary of significant legislative issues addressed during the legislative session. Known as the "Session Review," the summary briefly describes the major pieces of legislation—enacted and not enacted—that were considered during the legislative session. The staff works with committee counsels and other legislative staff to prepare the report.

Research office staff also prepares and publishes periodic research reports and memoranda designed to provide legislative history and background information on issues regularly considered by the Legislature.

### Training

The Research Office develops and offers periodic training sessions for legislators and staff. The office also can provide individual orientation sessions to legislators and their staffs. The orientation sessions are designed to further assist legislators and staff regarding the research tools available within and outside the Legislature and to give directions, if needed, about how to proceed with a particular research project.

### Redistricting

The Research Office has been closely involved with redistricting since 1990, providing all of the legal, technical (GIS), and administrative staff support required for the process in 2001 and 2011.

### Legislative Issues Symposium

The Director of Research is responsible for coordinating the Legislative Issues Symposium.

The symposium is usually held every other year during the autumn. Its purpose is to allow current and newly elected Nebraska state senators some time to get to know each other and learn more about policy issues they might face during the upcoming legislative session.

## **Legislative Reference Library**

The Legislative Reference Library is located with the Research Office. It is a nontraditional library in the sense that the collection is defined by its users and their needs. (Users in this setting include senators and legislative and division staff.)

The library maintains a collection of approximately 6,000 titles, including books and periodicals on topics of interest to policy makers. The library catalog is computerized and can be accessed in legislative offices via the UniNet. In other words, senators and legislative staff can use the computers in their offices to locate reference materials, books, periodicals, and state and federal government documents housed in the library.

The Legislative Reference Library offers the following services.

### **Reference Collection**

The library maintains a reference collection that includes general reference tools, such as *The World Almanac*, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, and *The Book of the States*. More specialized reference materials contained in the collection include the *Commerce Clearing House (CCH) State Tax Guide*, the *Fair Labor Standards Handbook*, and the *Nebraska Tax Guides*.

### **InterLibrary Loan**

InterLibrary Loan (ILL) is another service offered by the library. ILL makes the resources of approximately 15,000 libraries throughout the United States available to senators and staff. If a patron needs materials (books, articles, etc.) not in the library collection, the library staff will ILL

the material from an external source (i.e., another library).

### **Orders and Acquisitions**

If a library patron needs material that is not in the library collection, is unavailable through ILL, and is something that should be added to the library collection, the staff will purchase the material, subject to approval by the Director of Research. If a purchase request is denied, alternative means of accessing the desired information will be suggested.

The library publishes a quarterly acquisitions list of materials that have been added to the collection. The acquisitions list also is available on the UniNet.

### **Reference Service**

Library staff answers reference requests submitted by senators, their staffs, and divisions. The library will locate relevant information as quickly as possible in response to patrons' requests. Inquiries vary from simple requests for material on hand to complex searches of various computer databases.

### **Databases**

The library has access to a number of governmental and commercial databases. The databases frequently used by the library include:

- OCLC (Online Computer Library Center)—an international computer network that libraries use to order and catalog books and other library materials, arrange interlibrary loans, and maintain location information on library materials.
- NEBRASKA ACCESS—an interactive online information network hosted by the Nebraska Library Commission that references books, journal articles, and other materials available in a given subject area. Nebraska Access comprises several

databases that enable users to search for specific journal articles or to search subjects for a listing of relevant articles.

- Omaha World-Herald database—covers the time period beginning August 4, 1983 to the present.
- Lincoln Journal Star database—covers the time period beginning June 1, 1996 to the present.

### **Circulation of Material**

The library receives approximately 70 periodicals, which deal with public policy issues. The vast majority (90 percent) are routed to legislative users who choose periodicals of interest to them from the Annotated Periodicals List published by the library.

### **Newspapers**

Local and national newspapers available for use in the library include:

- Omaha World-Herald (daily and Sunday)
- Lincoln Journal Star (daily and Sunday)
- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal

As a service to legislative patrons, the library retains back issues of the above newspapers for six months.

### **Nebraska Reports, Nebraska Legislative Journals, Session Laws**

The library collection includes the Nebraska Reports (which report opinions of the Nebraska Supreme Court) dating back to 1901, as well as the Nebraska Legislative Journals and the Laws of Nebraska (Session Laws) dating back to 1855.

### **Browsing Area**

The library maintains a browsing area for its patrons. The browsing area is convenient to the entire library collection, including newspapers.

## LEGISLATIVE AUDIT OFFICE

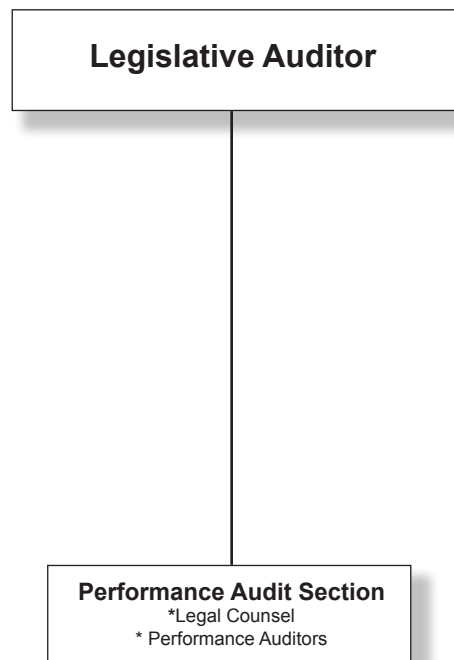
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**Legislative Auditor:** Martha Carter

**Room:** 11th floor

**Phone:** 471-1282

### Organizational Chart



## **Legislative Audit Office**

The Legislative Audit Office conducts performance audits on topics selected by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, comprised of the Speaker, the chairpersons of the Executive Board and the Appropriations Committee, and four senators chosen by the Executive Board. A performance audit is “an objective and systematic examination of evidence for the purpose of providing an independent assessment of the performance of a government organization, program, activity, or function.” (Neb. Rev. Stat. sec. 50-1203(8)) Performance audits may have a variety of objectives, including the assessment of a program’s effectiveness and results, economy and efficiency, internal control, and compliance

with legal or other requirements.

The office’s work is governed by the Legislative Performance Audit Act, which requires performance audits to be conducted in compliance with the standards developed by the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Among other things, GAO’s standards require the office’s work to be independent, objective and evidence-based. A 2012 peer review confirmed that the office meets or exceeds GAO standards.

Suggestions for performance audits may be made by legislators, constitutional officers and legislative division directors, and may be submitted to the committee chair at any time.

## COORDINATOR OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

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**Coordinator:** Chuck Hubka  
**Room:** 1503  
**Phone:** 471-2717

### General Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Coordinator of Legislative Services include coordinating logistics for senators and divisions; directing the physical setup of hearing rooms, meeting rooms and the legislative chamber; monitoring conditions in legislative offices and hearing rooms and directing that necessary improvements be made; and responding to senators' requests.

### Office Space and Furnishings

The Coordinator of Legislative Services is responsible for coordinating acquisition of office space, floor planning, and office moving for the Legislative Council. If you have any questions regarding office moves or office space, please contact the Coordinator.

Requests to purchase, repair or move office furniture should be made to the Coordinator of Legislative Services.

Repair requests such as broken locks, burned-out light bulbs and heating and cooling concerns

should be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services.

### Telephones

Telephone repair requests should be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services, who will then contact the repair company.

### Parking

Questions about parking in the Executive Parking Lot (the lot across the street east of the Capitol) should be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services.

### Hearing Rooms and Meeting Rooms

Questions regarding the setup of hearing rooms, meeting rooms and food service in these rooms, as well as requests for equipment should be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services. Requests to schedule a legislative hearing or meeting room should be directed to the Human Resources Coordinator within the Clerk's Office.

### Construction Projects

The Coordinator of Legislative Services coordinates with the Office of the Capitol Commission and outside contractors regarding construction projects within the legislative environment.

### Videoconferencing

Questions about use of the videoconferencing and teleconference systems for legislative hearings or meetings should be directed to the Coordinator of Legislative Services.





## SENATORS' PAY AND BENEFITS

### Salary

Your salary, established in the state constitution, is \$12,000 annually. You will be paid \$1,000 on the last working day of each month. All checks are direct deposited. You must submit banking information to the Accounting Office.

### Benefits

#### Health Insurance

You are eligible for health insurance benefits at the state group rate, although you must pay the entire premium. Health insurance options include:

UnitedHealthcare (UHC) offers the following options:

- **Regular**
- **High Deductible**
- **Choice**
- **Wellness** — if you elect this coverage, you will have different prescription benefits (see below)

For a list of participating providers, please access the UHC web site at <http://nebraska.welcometouhc.com>.

New hires and spouses (if applicable) who elect the Wellness option must complete the Health Assessment within approximately 45 days of hire.

Participants who choose to elect the Wellness medical plan must complete wellness programs (3 steps) on an annual basis in order to qualify for the Wellness coverage for the upcoming medical plan year. At the beginning of each annual cycle, participants will choose and enroll in a wellness program (step 1), and then finish each annual cycle by completing a biometric screening (step 2)

and health assessment (step 3).

Those individuals who meet the Wellness criteria will have the option of electing or remaining in the Wellness option.

**Pharmacy Benefit** — UnitedHealthcare is the State of Nebraska's new medical insurance provider, and the new pharmacy benefit manager is OptumRx, an affiliate of the UnitedHealth Group. This will apply regardless of what type of UHC coverage you elect. You cannot enroll in just the prescription coverage. There are added tiers of costs for medications based on their overall value. Please note that if you enroll in the Wellness option you will have additional pharmacy benefits.

#### Other benefits available to you include:

- Dental Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Deferred Compensation Plan
- Flexible Benefit Plan — Includes Dependent Care and Medical Reimbursement Accounts, which allow you to pay for benefits before taxes are paid
- Workers' Compensation
- Nebraska State Employees Credit Union
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Changes to your benefits are permitted only during the annual open enrollment period. However, you may enroll and/or change your elections during the year if you experience a change in qualifying event.

These events include:

- A marriage, divorce or legal separation (If adding a spouse due to marriage, the effective date is ALWAYS the first of the

- month following the marriage.)
- The birth or adoption of a child
- The death of a spouse or dependent child
- Gain or loss of coverage for a dependent child under age 26
- A change in employment status for you or your spouse, if it affects your benefit eligibility
- A change corresponding with a spouse's open enrolment period at his or her place of employment
- Being newly eligible for Medicare coverage
- Loss of eligibility for coverage under a State Medicaid or CHIP program
- Becoming eligible for state premium assistance under Medicaid or CHIP

## Expense Reimbursement

There are two different systems of reimbursement for expenses: session and interim expenses. Both types of reimbursements will be directly deposited into your bank account.

### Sessional Expense Reimbursement System (per diems)

You will receive reimbursement for mileage and expenses for days the Legislature is in session.

At the end of each month, you will receive a form on which to record the number of round trips you have taken during the month and the number of days spent in session.

Under a policy adopted by the Executive Board, the reimbursement rates are based on the distance between the Capitol and a senator's residence. If you reside more than 50 miles from the Capitol, you are allowed reimbursement for one round trip each week coupled with a per diem rate of \$123 per legislative day. If commercial travel is warranted, the actual cost of such commercial transportation may be reimbursed. How-

ever, if the actual cost of commercial transportation exceeds the mileage reimbursement rate, then approval must be obtained on an annual basis from the Chairperson of the Executive Board. If you reside 50 miles or less from the Capitol, you are allowed reimbursement for one round trip each day the Legislature is in session. There is a smaller per diem rate of \$46 per legislative day for legislators who reside 50 miles or less from the Capitol. (The Legislature's sessional expense reimbursement policy appears in this section.)

## Expense Records

Because of constitutional construction, it is necessary that all legislators maintain adequate expense records to ensure that per diem payments received do not exceed actual expenses incurred throughout the year. A calendar is provided to all members to assist in this expense recordkeeping requirement. An expense verification of randomly selected legislators is conducted twice during each legislative session by an independent accounting firm chosen by the Executive Board. Briefings are conducted before each verification to answer any questions you may have. In the meantime, feel free to contact the Executive Board, the Clerk of the Legislature or the Assistant Clerk for more information.

### Interim Expenses and Travel Expense Reimbursement

It should be noted that all State travel, other than to and from the Capitol office, for either in-state or out-of-state travel, must be approved by the Chairperson of the Executive Board, or his or her designee, prior to the date of travel. Please refer to the travel policy contained in the Legislative Council Policy Manual for guidelines, policies and procedures to be followed.

All State travel expenses are reimbursed for actual expenses incurred. After returning from

travel, an expense reimbursement document must be completed no later than 60 days after the final day on which expenses were accrued and submitted to the Legislative Accounting Office for reimbursement. Original detailed/itemized receipts for lodging, registration, airfare and meals (including detailed/itemized meal receipts equal to or greater than \$5.00) must be submitted with the expense document.

**One-day trip:** No meals allowed.

**Overnight trip:** Departure day, leave home by 6:30 a.m., breakfast allowed; leave home by 11 a.m., noon meal allowed; leave home by 5 p.m., evening meal allowed. Return day, arrive home after 2 p.m., noon meal allowed; arrive home after 7 p.m., evening meal allowed. It is imperative to fill in your departure and return time.

## SESSION EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

### Reimbursement Rate

Sections 50-201 and 50-202, R.R.S. of Neb. 1943, authorizes the payment of necessary expenses to members of the Legislature for expenses paid or incurred while performing in their official capacity as a member of the Legislature. The Executive Board has adopted an expense reimbursement plan which operates as follows:

- a) For those senators who reside more than fifty (50) miles from the State Capitol, the Legislature provides reimbursement to the members of an amount equal to the federal reimbursement rate (which currently is \$123) times the number of legislative days in a regular or special session. In addition, a member receives mileage reimbursement for one round trip per week from the senator's home to the State Capitol. Members who reside more than fifty (50) miles from the Capitol are entitled to receive the weekly allowance only if they are present for one or more legislative days during that calendar week. Reimbursement for travel by automobile shall be at the state mileage reimbursement rate. If commercial travel is warranted, the actual cost of such commercial transportation may be reimbursed. However, if the actual cost of commercial transportation exceeds the mileage reimbursement rate, then approval must be obtained on an annual basis from the Chairperson of the Executive Board.
- b) For those senators who reside fifty (50) miles or less from the State Capitol, the Legislature provides reimbursement to the members of an amount equal to the federal reimbursement rate for meals and incidental expenses (which currently is

\$46) times the number of legislative days in a regular or special session. In addition, the member receives mileage reimbursement for those legislative days that he/she actually attends a daily session or a committee meeting on that same day. Mileage is reimbursed at the statutory state mileage reimbursement rate from the senator's home to the State Capitol and back.

The rate established for reimbursement of members who reside more than fifty (50) miles from the State Capitol is based on what the federal government allows in terms of expenses for its employees when they are in Lincoln on government business. The rate is established by the General Services Administration and covers, among other items, lodging, meals and incidental expenses.

For those members who reside fifty (50) miles or less from the State Capitol, expenses include, among other things, meals and incidentals. It is assumed that these members will commute between their home and the State Capitol. The fifty (50) mile standard is the same used by the Internal Revenue Service in applying section 162(H) as it relates to "Tax Home Determination" by state legislators.

### Legal History

The Nebraska Supreme Court, in both State ex rel Douglas vs. Beermann, 216 Neb. 849 (1984) and State ex rel Spire vs. Public Employees Retirement Board, 226 Neb. 176 (1987), recognizes that expenses that relate to fulfilling the duties associated with service in the Legislature are reimbursable. The standard for necessary expenses which may be reimbursed are those which have been actually paid or legally incurred during the year. (Emphasis added). Members receive no

compensation for their services in excess of the amount prescribed in the Nebraska Constitution.

The Executive Board is responsible for defining the parameters of what types of expenses are reimbursable, consistent with the provisions of Section 50-203. It is the policy of the Executive Board that members of the Legislature shall be reimbursed only for ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred in the performance of their duties to the state as legislators.

The term “ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred” is the standard prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service for deductible expenses associated with carrying on a trade or business. The Executive Board shall look to those rules and regulations for guidance in determining what expenses are “necessary” expenses in performance of a member’s duties as a state legislator.

The reimbursement policy is, in part, designed to represent a cap on reimbursed expenses, rather than establishing items which are deductible.

## Reimbursable Expenses

Because of the variation between legislative districts and members’ responsibilities, no comprehensive list of expenses can be established. However, the Executive Board may determine whether a specific expense is reimbursable under the sessional expenses reimbursement plan.

The following constitutes a list of some of the kinds of expenses that are considered reimbursable under the operation of the sessional expenses reimbursement plan.

- Expenses related to attending legislative sessions
- Expenses related to intra-district travel (e.g., transportation expenses, meals, parking)
- Expenses related to statewide travel (e.g., transportation expenses, lodging, meals, parking)

- Expenses related to travel to and from Lincoln (e.g., transportation expenses, lodging, meals)
- Expenses related to attending conferences and/or seminars (e.g., transportation expenses, lodging, meals, registration fees, parking)
- Expenses related to carrying out legislative duties from home or business office (e.g., telephone expenses, secretarial assistance, meals, office equipment and supplies)
- Miscellaneous expenses related to carrying out legislative duties (e.g., magazine and newspaper subscriptions, expenditures for promotional activities, dues, fees for professional services, costs associated with constituent meetings and services)

The Chairperson of the Executive Board shall review the system for reimbursing the members and may recommend any changes, if necessary, to make certain that the reimbursement amount does not exceed expenses paid or incurred.

To that end, it shall be necessary for all individual senators to maintain expense records. The records maintained shall be of a similar type of record necessary to meet the “deductibility” test as developed by the Internal Revenue Service through its various regulations and tax court rulings. However, detailed records, as they relate to meals, need not be kept as long as there is some record of attendance at a function that the individual legislator attends.

## Verification Process

The Executive Board shall contract with a certified public accounting firm for purposes of verifying the actual expenses records, as kept by members, in relationship to the sessional reimbursement received. The accounting firm shall be responsible for verifying that expense reimburse-



ment payments do not exceed expenses actually paid or incurred by the individual members.

The verification process shall be conducted so as to be consistent with auditing procedures as they relate to tax audits. Some of the elements of the verification process are as follows:

1. It will be the responsibility of the certified public accounting firm selected to meet the GAAS requirements, to the extent such requirements are applicable.
2. Legislators will be assigned a number so that a computer may then randomly sample a group of 10-12 legislators twice during the course of a regular legislative session. No senator shall be required to have his or her expense records reviewed more than once during a two-year legislature.
3. The Executive Board will create a profile for each senator, which will include information such as location of home district, number of miles from Lincoln and a recap of actual monies paid under the sessional expenses reimbursement system. This information will be supplied to the accounting firm.
4. The Executive Board, with guidance from the accounting firm, will provide senators with a format to present their expenses to the accounting firm. Guidelines as to acceptable explanations for those expenses not directly associated with the legislative sessions will also be provided to the legislators.
5. The Executive Board will provide senators with a log to assist in the record-keeping requirements.
6. All expenses will be examined at least until enough have been verified to meet the payments received.
7. The Executive Board, as opposed to the accounting firm, will make the determination as to what types of expenses are reimbursable.
8. The generally accepted auditing standards to be utilized include the following:
  - A. The engagement is to be performed by a person or persons having adequate technical training and proficiency as an auditor.
  - B. In all matters relating to the assignment, an independence in mental attitude is to be maintained by the auditor or auditors.
  - C. Due professional care is to be exercised in the performance of the verification process.
  - D. The work is to be adequately planned, and assistants, if any, are to be properly supervised.
  - E. Sufficient competent evidential matter is to be obtained through inspection, observation, inquiries and confirmations to afford a reasonable basis for the auditor to report on the members' compliance with the expense reimbursement policy.
  - F. The report shall either contain an expression that the member has complied with the provisions of the expense reimbursement policy or a description of each instance of noncompliance.

Twice during each regular legislative session the accounting firm shall randomly select 10-12 senators for a records verification by the accounting firm. The verification shall be designed to ensure that sessional expense payments do not exceed expenses paid or incurred. The account-



ing firm shall report its findings to the chair of the Executive Board, who in turn shall report the results in writing to the Attorney General.

Pursuant to the provisions of 84-712.05, expense records maintained by individual senators shall be kept confidential. However, when required by the chair of the Executive Board, each member shall produce, for the accounting firm's verification, his or her expense records. The accounting firm will maintain the confidentiality of the expense records verified.

The first verification, as called for, shall be no later than the 45th legislative day in a long session and no later than the 30th legislative day in a short session. The second verification shall be completed as soon as possible following the sine die adjournment of the regular session.

Should a member refuse to disclose his/her expense records, as requested by the accounting firm, then such member shall not be entitled to expenses reimbursement, as currently allowed

under the expense reimbursement system. Furthermore, any member who refuses to disclose his/her expense records may be required to remit to the state any sessional reimbursement amounts received during that session.

In addition, if the verification process utilized by the accounting firm shows that a member has in fact received expense monies in excess of expenses actually paid or incurred, then one of two actions will occur: First, that member's sessional expense reimbursement may be reduced by the number of legislative days times the daily rate that comes closest to the amount of the projected excess; or in the alternative, the member shall, upon written notice by the Executive Board Chairperson, immediately remit to the state the amount of any excess payment.

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the sessional expenses reimbursement system rests with the individual member.

## GUIDELINES FOR LEGISLATIVE EXPENSE VERIFICATION PROCESS

The following guidelines summarize the standards that will be used by the Dana Cole Company for the 2012 legislative expenses verification process:

**Meals** — Receipts for meals will not be required if the amount does not exceed \$46 a day. Receipts will be required if the amount exceeds \$46 a day or if the period of attendance is over two nights and it is during non-session days.

**Auto** — The federal rate for auto expenses for the period of January 1, 2011 through June 30, 2011 is .51 cents per mile. On July 1, 2011 the federal rate changed to 55.5 cents per mile; or the total actual expenses of the auto use plus depreciation times the percentage of legislative use, whichever is higher. For those miles for which you have been reimbursed, you may claim the difference between the federal reimbursement rate and the allowable rate.

**Living or Accommodation Expense** — These expenses will be allowed as long as they are reasonable including fees which are considered rent by definition. If a larger than normal space is used because of family members then only a portion of the living expenses will be allowed. Adequate documentation will be lease agreements or canceled rent checks.

**Office in Home Expense** — This expense will be allowed only for those senators residing outside of Lincoln because the Lincoln senators are able to use their state offices. Allowed expenses will be the same as those allowed under the Federal Tax Code.

**Entertainment** — These expenses are allowed as long as they qualify as expenses related to carrying out legislative duties. Social Club dues (i.e., Rotary Club) are not allowable.

**Advertising and Promotion** — Any advertising or promotion as long as it is not part of the individual's campaign expenditures would be allowed. The statement of support form available

in the Clerk's Office will sufficiently substantiate any of these qualified expenditures. Other statements, memos, or appointment calendar notations accompanied by canceled checks will also suffice.

**Contributions** — These would not be considered allowable expenses for the reimbursement policy; however, most of these types of expenses could be reclassified as meals or promotion and would be allowable under those categories.

**Gifts** — These are allowed up to \$25.00 per person as long as they relate to the business of legislative duties.

**Travel and Expenses** — Any travel or other expenses regardless of whether inside or outside the legislative district must relate to the performance of legislative duties to be allowable.

**Incidental Expenses** — These expenses connected with legislative duties will be considered allowable to the extent of \$20.00 per month without the normal substantiation.

The monthly calendar record books will be sufficient for most of the meal, auto, and office expenses; however, receipts for other types of expenses will be required for substantiation. Examples of these receipts would be supply receipts, service or employee contracts, and airline tickets.

The period selected for the first verification process will cover expenses incurred beginning on the first day of the interim, following the previous regular session, through the end of February. The period selected for the second verification process will cover expenses incurred from the first day of the interim following the previous regular session through the end of the regular session.

If you have questions, please feel free to call, Kerry Gustafsson, Dana F. Cole Company, at (402) 479-9321.

## SENATORS' STAFF

### Senators' staff

Under the Legislature's personnel policy, as a freshman legislator, you may hire two people for your office — an administrative assistant and a legislative aide.

#### Administrative assistant

An administrative assistant works under the general supervision of a senator and performs work involving secretarial services, administrative services, public relations, office management and other work as required. An administrative assistant is classified as a "salary grade C" position. The hiring rate for an administrative assistant is \$26,052 annually, which means \$2,171.00 monthly or \$12.525 hourly.

#### Legislative aide

A legislative aide works under the general supervision of a senator and performs work involving research, writing, public relations, constituent services, office management and other related work as required. A legislative aide is classified as a "salary grade E" position. The hiring rate for a legislative aide is \$34,455 annually, which means \$2,871.27 monthly or \$16.565 hourly.

More extensive job descriptions, including examples of the work required for these two positions, appear later in this section. Copies of the Legislative Classification and Pay Plan can be obtained from the Legislature's Accounting and Budgeting Office. This office also will respond to any questions that you might have about personnel issues.

According to the pay plan, all employees must be hired at the hiring rate of the salary grade for their positions. However, an applicant may be hired at up to 12 percent above the hiring rate if

the person has training or experience that exceeds the entry level knowledge, abilities and skills required for the position. For more information on this matter, refer to the pay plan.

Your staff will have the option of receiving their paychecks every other week or monthly. They also must have their paychecks deposited directly into their bank accounts.

You are responsible for signing your staff's time sheets, which are due on the last day of a pay period or the following Monday. If a staff person works on a regular basis at least half-time, that person is eligible for all benefits in proportion to the time worked. Regular employees working less than half-time are not eligible for insurance benefits.

Temporary employees who work at least 20 hours per week and have at least a six-month continuous long-term assignment are eligible for (non tax sheltered) health, dental and long-term disability coverage.

### Employee Assistance Program

The Nebraska Legislative Council has partnered with Best Care Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide you and your staff confidential counseling and support. Everyday life can be stressful, and prolonged stress can affect health, well-being and performance. Your Best Care EAP is available to provide assistance in finding solutions. Short-term counseling and consultation services are available for you, employees and dependent family members. Best Care EAP professional, licensed counselors will also provide referrals to community resources for continued care, if necessary.

Best Care EAP, which is available statewide, offers confidential in-person, telephone and online assessment, counseling and follow-up for a wide range of concerns including (but not limited to):

- Stress
- Grief and Loss
- Life Transitions
- Marital/Relationship Concerns
- Substance Abuse
- Depression
- Family Struggles

Best Care professionals are also available to provide consultation and assistance to senators and supervisors in dealing with employees having attendance, conduct or other job performance problems.

Best Care EAP is an effective solution to many of the problems employers and employees face. For more information about Best Care EAP services, or to schedule a confidential consultation or appointment, call (800) 666-8606 or (402) 354-8000. Information about EAP services, as well as a great deal of health and wellness information can also be accessed on the website at [www.BestCareEAP.org](http://www.BestCareEAP.org), under the “For Employers” tab.

**Senator Login:**

USER: bclegma  
PASSWORD: leg

## LEGISLATIVE CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN/PERSONNEL POLICIES

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The Legislative Classification and Pay Plan was adopted by the Executive Board on December 10, 1983, and it has been revised periodically since then. The latest revision was adopted June 27, 2008. It includes the components of the pay plan for senators' staff and division staff, staffing patterns, job descriptions and salary grade ranges.

The following are the job descriptions for the administrative assistant and legislative aide positions and personnel policies for Legislative Employees. Additional copies of these documents may be obtained in the Accounting and Budget Office.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISCLOSURE

The following are certain statutes pertinent to the Accountability and Disclosure Commission. Each of these have relevance to you as you begin your legislative term of office.

### Section 49-1423

#### **Gift, defined.**

Gift shall mean a payment, subscription, advance, forbearance, rendering, or deposit of money, services, or anything of value, unless consideration of equal or greater value is given therefor. Gift shall not include a campaign contribution otherwise reported as required by law, a commercially reasonable loan made in the ordinary course of business, a gift received from a relative, a breakfast, luncheon, dinner, or other refreshments consisting of food and beverage provided for immediate consumption, or the occasional provision of transportation within the State of Nebraska.

### Section 49-1490

#### **Principal or lobbyist; prohibited acts relating to gifts; penalty.**

- (1) No principal, lobbyist, or person acting on behalf of either shall within one calendar month give any gifts with an aggregate value of more than fifty dollars to the following:
  - (a) An official or a member of the official's staff in the executive branch of state government;
  - (b) An official or a member of the official's staff in the legislative branch of state government; or
  - (c) A member of the immediate family of an official in the executive or legislative branch of state government.
- (2) No official or member of the official's

staff in the executive or legislative branch of state government or member of the official's immediate family shall within one calendar month accept from a principal, lobbyist, or person acting on behalf of either any gifts with an aggregate value of more than fifty dollars.

- (3) An admission to a state-owned facility or a state-sponsored industry or event may be given by any sponsoring agency, political subdivision, or publicly funded postsecondary educational institution and accepted regardless of value.
- (4) Any person who knowingly and intentionally violates this section shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.

### Section 49-1493

#### **Individuals required to file a statement of financial interests.**

The individuals listed in subdivisions (1) through (13) of this section shall file with the commission a statement of financial interests as provided in sections 49-1496 and 49-1497 for the preceding calendar year on or before April 1 of each year in which such individual holds such a position. An individual who leaves office shall, within thirty days after leaving office, file a statement covering the period since the previous statement was filed. Disclosure of the interest named in sections 49-1496 to 49-1498 shall be made by:

- (1) An individual holding a state executive office as provided in Article IV of the Constitution of Nebraska, including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor of Public Accounts, State Treasurer, Attorney General, Tax Commissioner, and heads of such other executive departments as set forth in the Constitution or as may be established by law;



- (2) An individual holding the office of Commissioner of Education, member of the State Board of Education, member of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska with the exception of student members, or member of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education;
- (3) A member of the Board of Parole;
- (4) A member of the Public Service Commission;
- (5) A member of the Legislature;
- (6) A member of the board of directors or an officer of a district organized under the provisions of Chapter 70;
- (7) A member of any board or commission of the state or any county which examines or licenses a business or which determines rates for or otherwise regulates a business;
- (8) A member of a land-use planning commission, zoning commission, or authority of the state or any county with a population of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants;
- (9) An elected official of a city of the primary or metropolitan class;
- (10) An elected county official;
- (11) A member of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board;
- (12) An individual employed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the position of Head Football Coach, Men's Basketball Coach, or Women's Basketball Coach; and
- (13) An official or employee of the state designated by rules and regulations of the commission who is responsible for taking or recommending official action of a non-ministerial nature with regard to:
  - (a) Contracting or procurement;
  - (b) Administering or monitoring grants or subsidies;
  - (c) Land-use planning or zoning;

- (d) Inspecting, licensing, regulating, or auditing any person; or
- (e) Any similar action.

## **Section 49-1496**

### **Statement of financial interests; form; contents; enumerated.**

- (1) The statement of financial interests filed pursuant to sections 49-1493 to 49-14,104 shall be on a form prescribed by the commission.
- (2) Individuals required to file under sections 49-1493 to 49-1495 shall file the following information for themselves:
  - (a) The name and address of and the nature of association with any business with which the individual was associated;
  - (b) The name and address of any entity in which a position of trustee was held;
  - (c) The name, address, and nature of business of a person or government body from whom any income in the value of one thousand dollars or more was received and the nature of the services rendered, except that the identification of patrons, customers, patients, or clients of such person from which employment income was received is not required;
  - (d) A description, but not the value, of the following, if the fair market value thereof exceeded one thousand dollars:
    - (i) The nature and location of all real property in the state, except the residence of the individual;
    - (ii) The depository of checking and savings accounts;
    - (iii) The issuer of stocks, bonds, and government securities; and
    - (iv) A description of all other property owned or held for the production of

- income, except property owned or used by a business with which the individual was associated;
- (e) The name and address of each creditor to whom the value of one thousand dollars or more was owed or guaranteed by the individual or a member of the individual's immediate family, except for the following:
    - (i) Accounts payable;
    - (ii) Debts arising out of retail installment transactions;
    - (iii) Loans made by financial institutions in the ordinary course of business;
    - (iv) Loans from a relative; and
    - (v) Land contracts that have been properly recorded with the county clerk or the register of deeds;
  - (f) The name, address, and occupation or nature of business of any person from whom a gift in the value of more than one hundred dollars was received, a description of the gift and the circumstances of the gift, and the monetary value category of the gift, based on a good faith estimate by the individual, reported in the following categories:
    - (i) \$100.01 - \$200;
    - (ii) \$200.01 - \$500;
    - (iii) \$500.01 - \$1,000; and
    - (iv) \$1,000.01 or more; and
  - (g) Such other information as the individual or the commission deems necessary, after notice and hearing, to carry out the purposes of the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act.
- any decision in the discharge of his or her official duties that may cause financial benefit or detriment to him or her, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which he or she is associated, which is distinguishable from the effects of such action on the public generally or a broad segment of the public, shall take the following actions as soon as he or she is aware of such potential conflict or should reasonably be aware of such potential conflict, whichever is sooner:
- (a) Prepare a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decision and the nature of the potential conflict, and if he or she will not abstain from voting, deliberating, or taking other action on the matter, the statement shall state why, despite the potential conflict, he or she intends to vote or otherwise participate; and
  - (b) Deliver a copy of the statement to the commission and to the Speaker of the Legislature who shall cause the statement to be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature to be held as a matter of public record.
- (2) Nothing in this section shall prohibit any member of the Legislature from voting, deliberating, or taking other action on any matter that comes before the Legislature.
  - (3) The member of the Legislature may abstain from voting, deliberating, or taking other action on the matter on which the potential conflict exists. He or she may have the reasons for the abstention recorded in the Legislative Journal.

## **Section 49-1499**

### **Legislature; discharge of official duties; potential conflict; actions required.**

- (1) A member of the Legislature who would be required to take any action or make

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

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A 1985 letter from Attorney General Robert Spire specifies when attorney general opinions will be issued to state legislators.

That letter, which appears in this section of your notebook, stipulates that it is the attorney general's policy to issue opinions to state legislators that concern only pending or proposed legislation. It also states that the Attorney General's Office will not respond to opinion requests on the constitutionality of existing statutes.

For more information on this policy, refer to the letter.

In addition, the Clerk's Office has on file other attorney general opinions that concern the interpretation of constitutional issues.

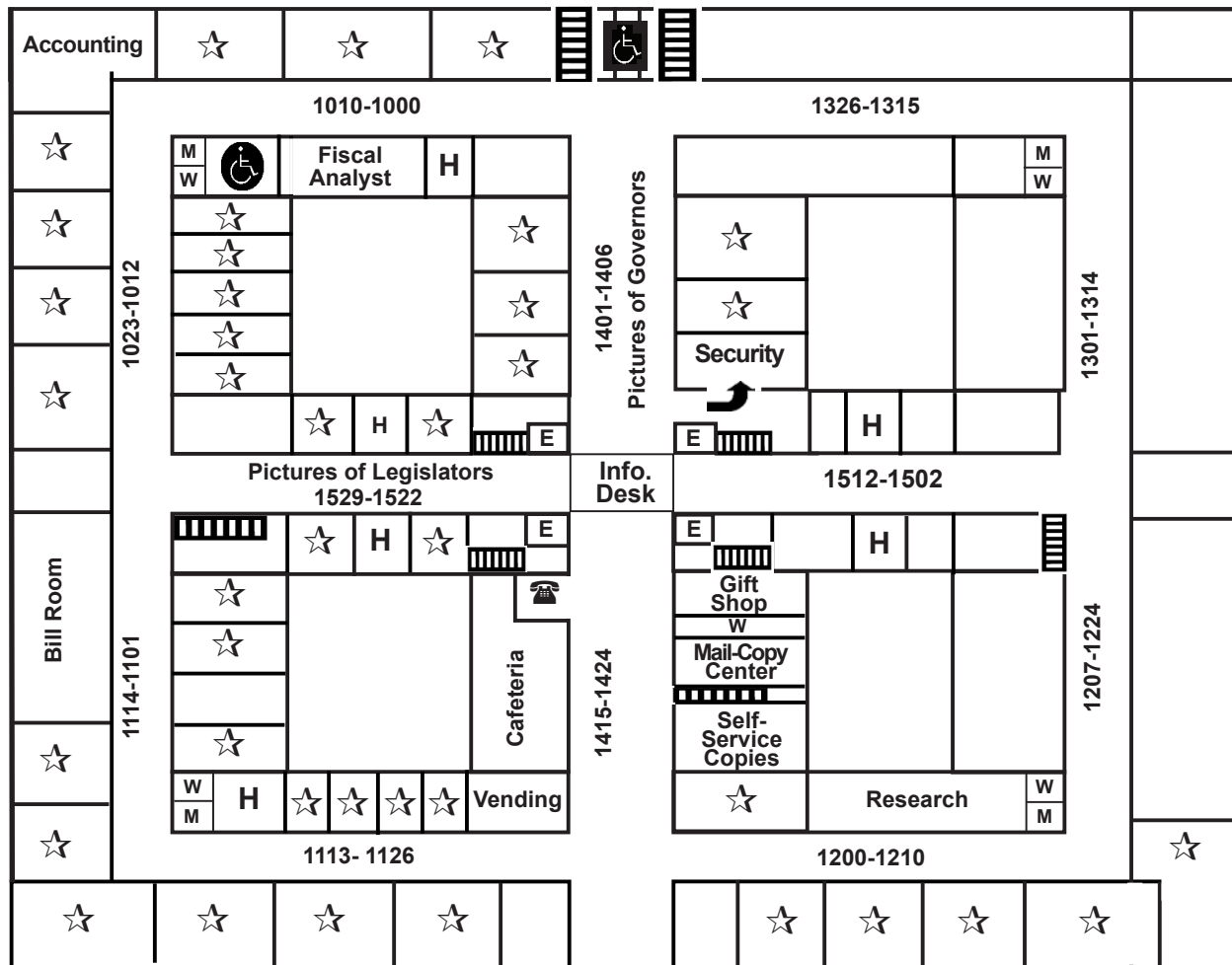
For example, there are a number of attorney general opinions interpreting constitutional provisions concerning the Legislature and the legislative process. Please see the clerk or assistant clerk for more information on these opinions.

## MISCELLANEOUS

This section contains information on a variety of subjects that might be of interest to you, including mail policies, the fax machine and hearing room reservations. An index is listed below:

<b>Capitol Floor Maps</b>	<b>77 — 82</b>
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### Capitol Maps, 1st Floor



**E** - Elevator

- Elevator (Handicap Accessible)

**H** - Hearing Rooms  
 Room 1003  
 Room 1113  
 Room 1507  
 Room 1510  
 Room 1524  
 Room 1525

- Public Telephone

- Senator's Office

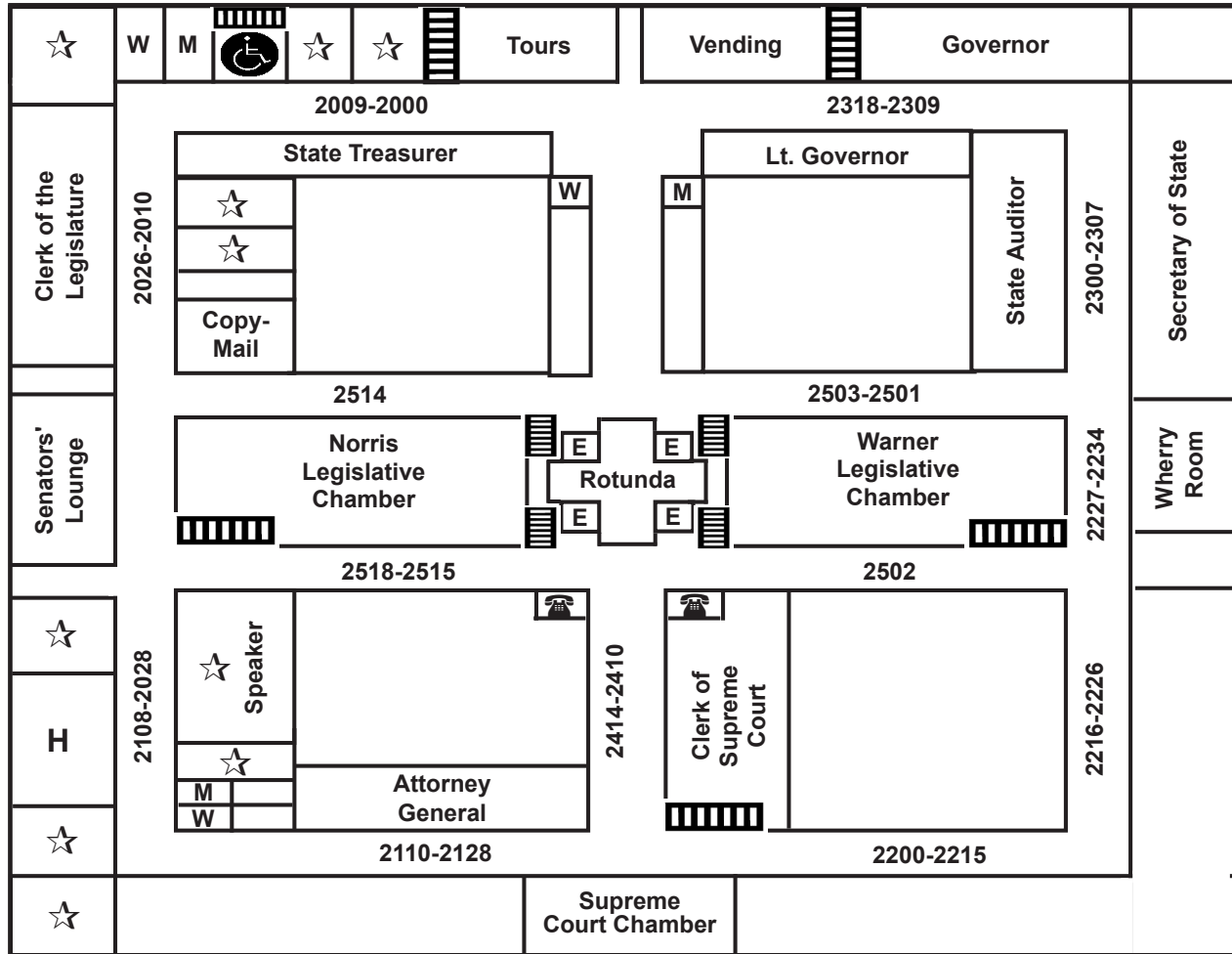
- Stairs

**M** - Men's Restroom

**W** - Women's Restroom

- Accessible Entrance

### Capitol Maps, 2nd Floor



E - Elevator

- Elevator (Handicap Accessible)

H - Hearing Room  
Room 2102

- Public Telephone

☆ - Senator's Office

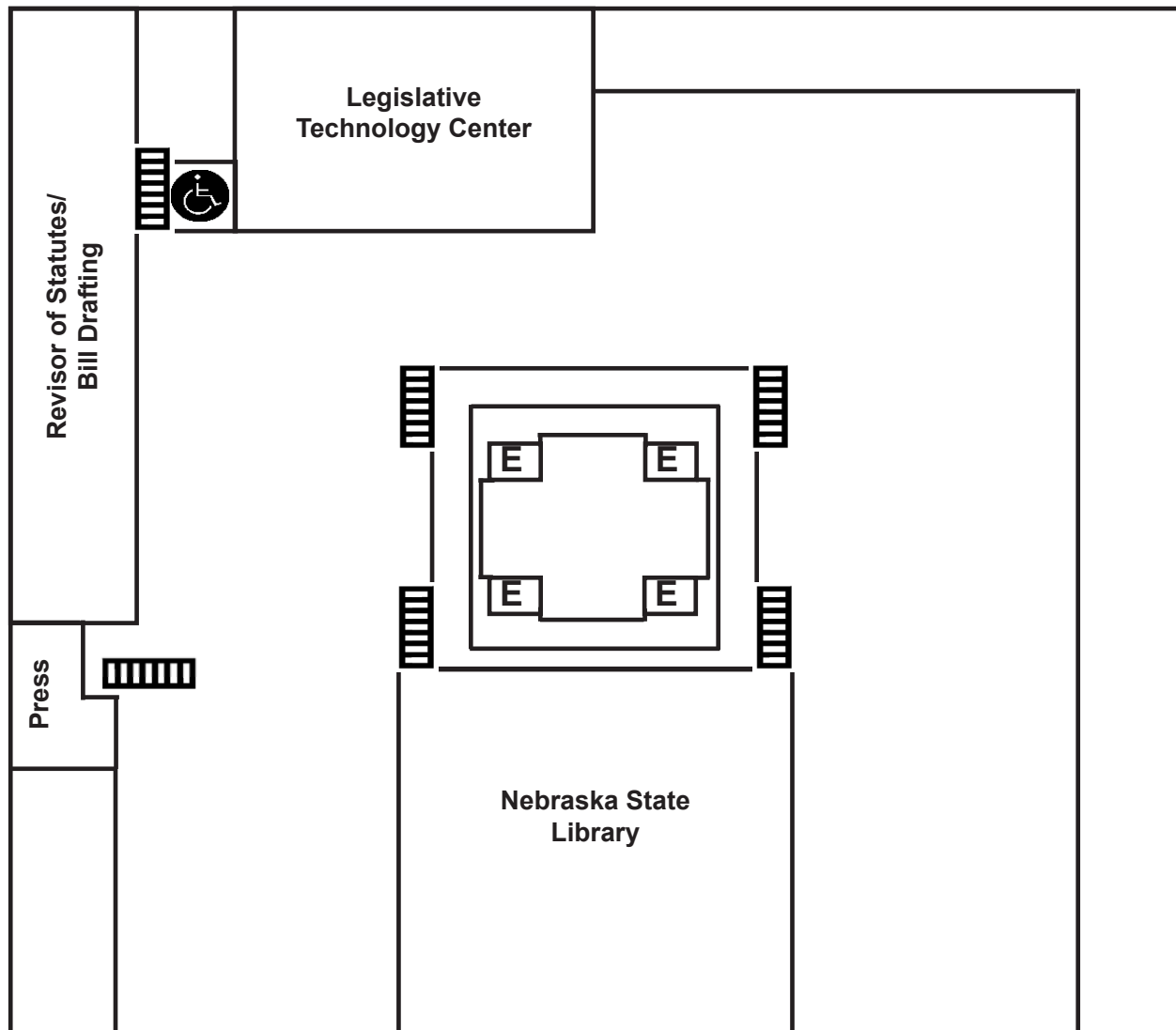
- Stairs

M - Men's Restroom

W - Women's Restroom



### Capitol Maps, 3rd Floor

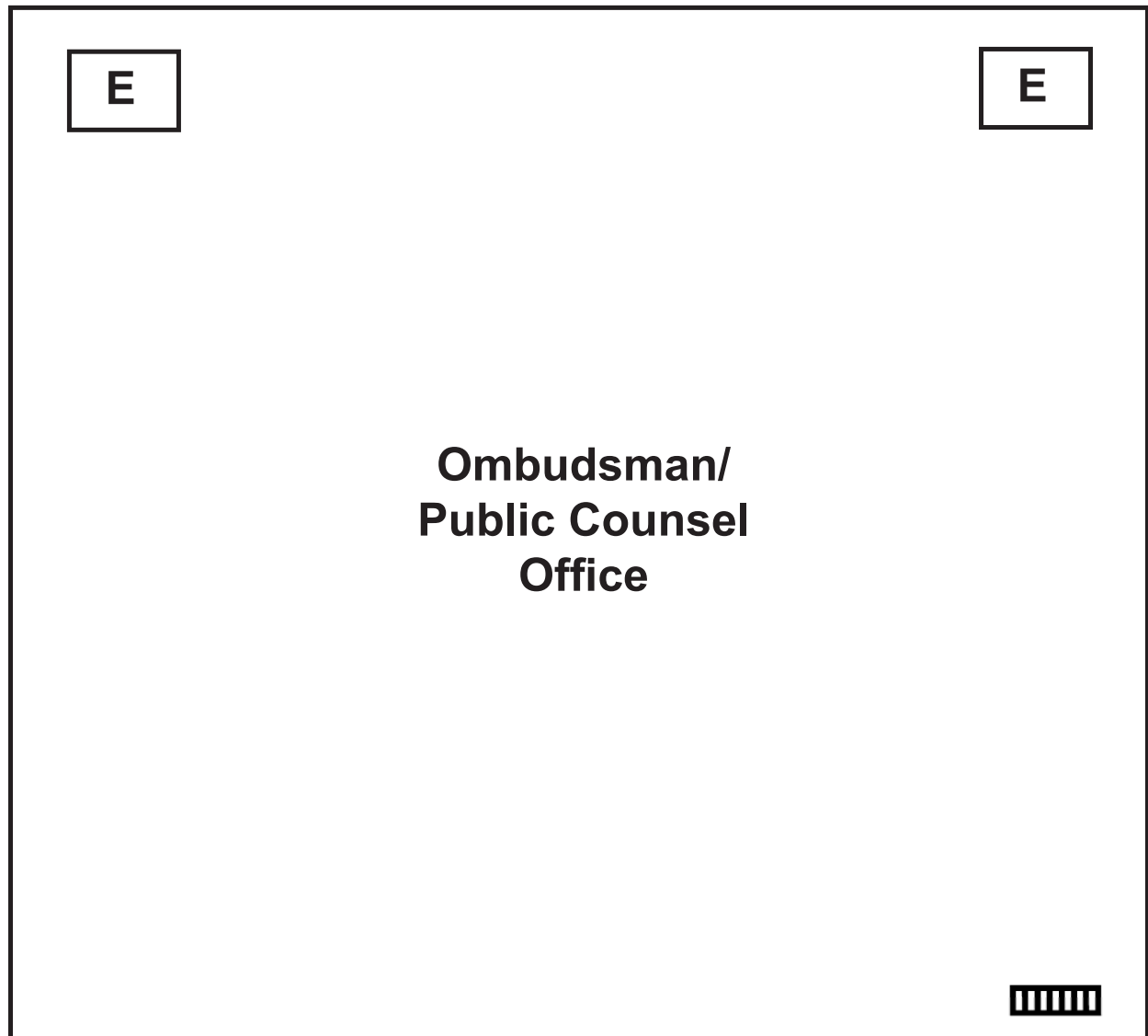


E - Elevator

 - Elevator (Handicap Accessible)

 - Stairs

Capitol Maps, 8th Floor

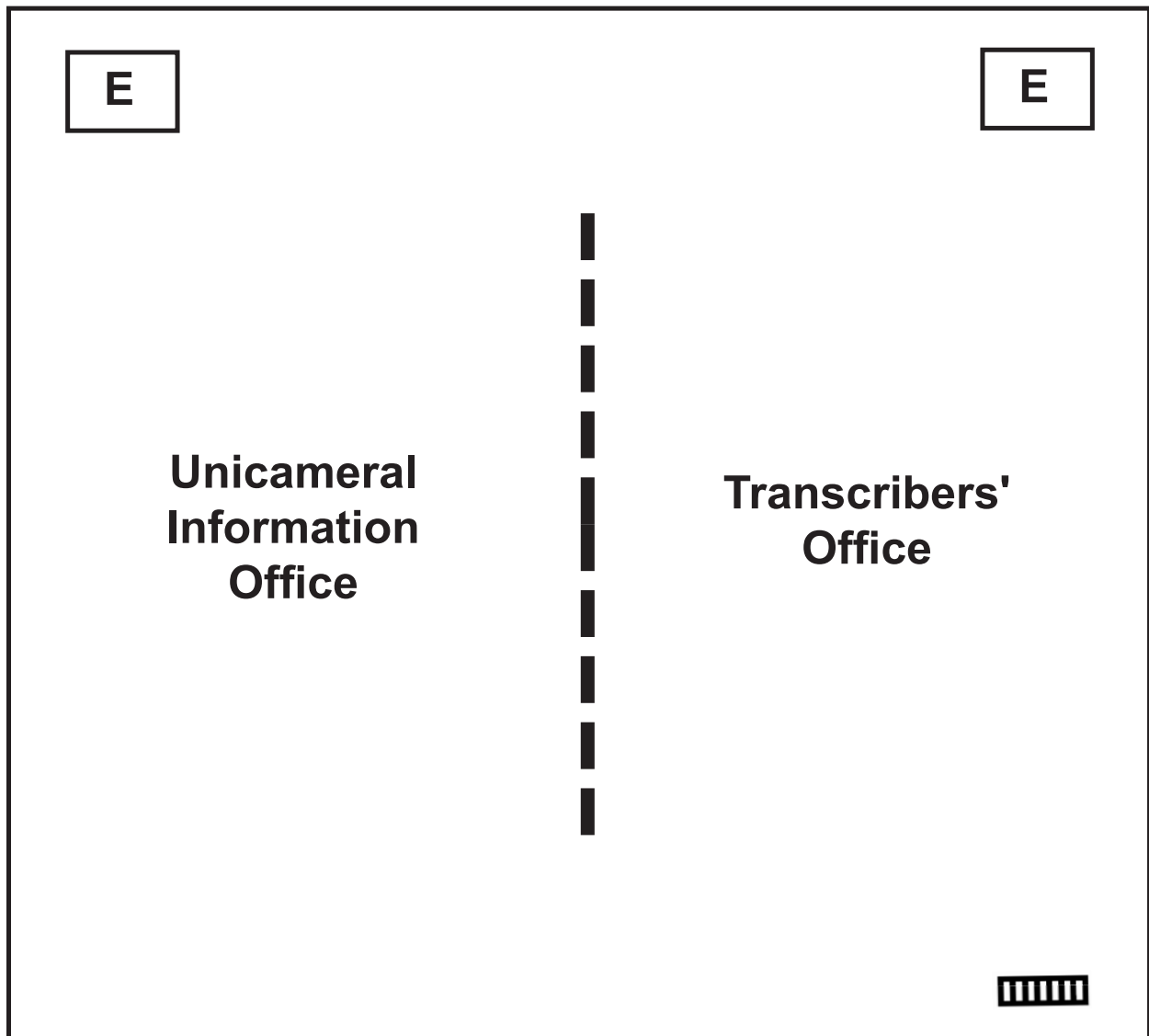


E - Elevator



- Stairs

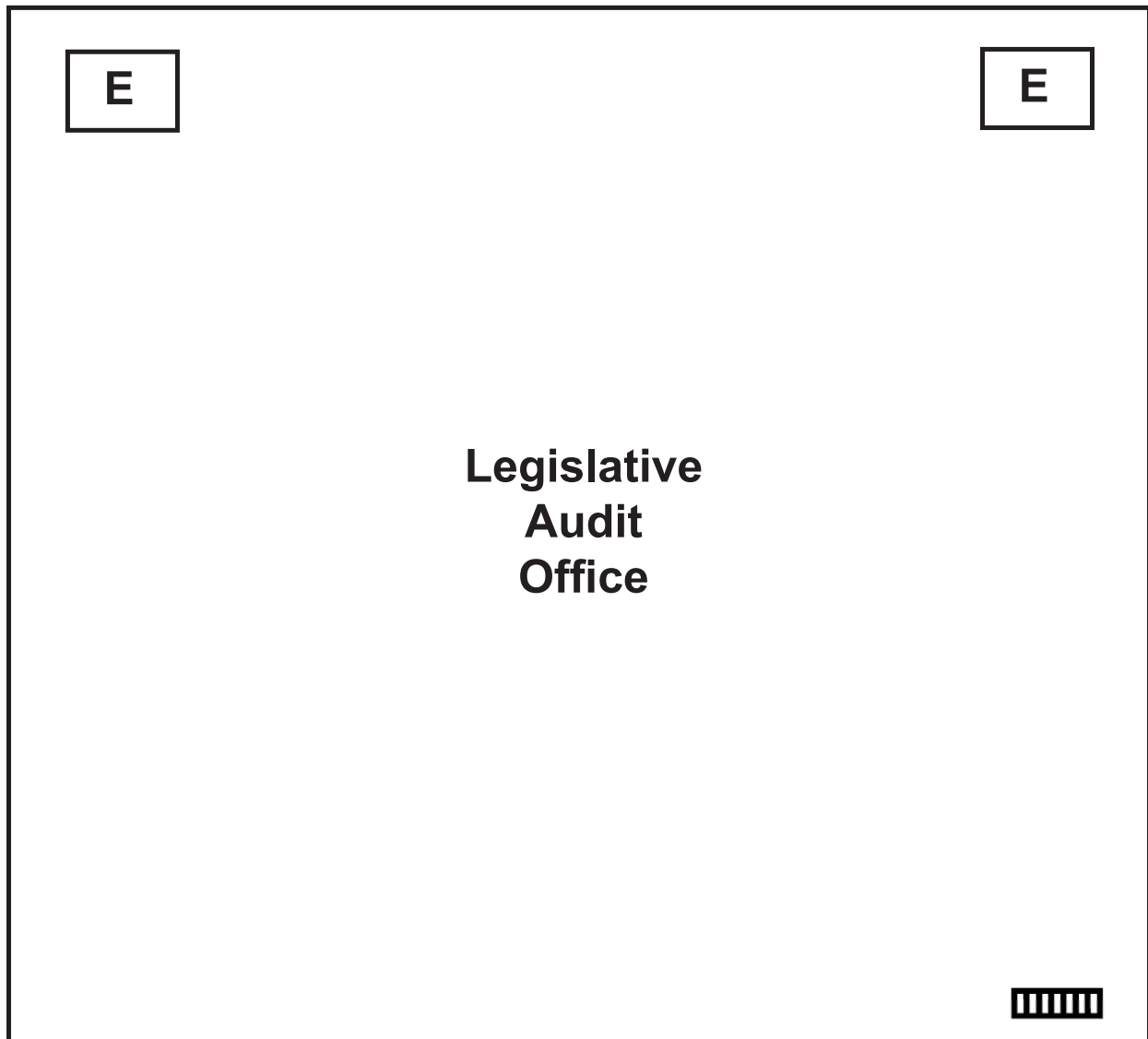
Capitol Maps, 10th Floor



E - Elevator

 - Stairs

Capitol Maps, 11th Floor



E - Elevator



- Stairs

## Access/Identification Cards

Access/Identification cards are issued through the Clerk's Office, Room 2018. The access/identification cards are produced with a photo by Capitol Security. Each legislative employee is required to have an access/identification card for access to the chamber during session and also to enter the building after hours. Any person who leaves employment from the Legislative Council must turn in their access/identification card to the Legislative Accounting Office.

## Keys

Letters requesting office keys are to be given to the Clerk's Office in Room 2018. New staff must have a letter of authorization signed by their senator in order to be issued a key. Staff leaving employment in an office must turn their key in to the Clerk's Office.

## Photocopying

A copy machine in Room 2021 is available to all senators and staff. A full-time key operator will assist you, if necessary, during the legislative session. Staff assistance is available during the interim. When copying assignments are large (20 copies of two or more pages) a copy requisition form should be filled out and the work must be taken to the Quick Copy Center on the first floor, Room 1419. Copy requisition forms can be filled out and printed off from the Forms section of the UniNet. The yellow copy of the requisition that is returned with the print job must be provided to the Accounting Office, Room 1010.

Two black-and-white self-service copiers are available in Room 1421 for access after 5 p.m., on weekends and for large copy assignments. The copiers have been programmed to use access codes. Please have your staff contact the Legislative Accounting Office in Room 1010 (471-2226) for instructions and access codes.

## Color Printer

A networked color laser jet printer is available through the Mail Room, Room 2021, for use by legislative employees. It is advised that no more than 60 copies of an individual color page be printed, and color copies should be limited to documents for committee hearings or floor handouts. When printing to the color printer from your office computer, select the Mail Room RICOH Aficio C820 DN PS printer option. Documents printed on the color printer will be placed in your mailbox by copy/mail room staff. If you have questions with regard to printer options and printer accessibility, please contact the Legislative Technology Center at 471-2234. If you have questions on printed materials, please contact the Mail Room at 471-2304.

## Fax

The Legislature's fax machine is located in Room 2021 and the fax phone number is 402-471-2126. Outgoing material may be faxed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. There is a 25-page limit on the number of pages that can be faxed at any one time.

The fax machine is not to be used to transmit copies of legislative bills. They should be mailed or can be accessed at our web site.

## Scanning / PDF Documents

Senators and staff may have documents scanned or converted into PDF at any of the following scanning stations:

- Mail/Copy room on second floor (Room 2021)
- Bill room on first floor (Room 1104)
- Legislative Research on first floor (Room 1201)
- Legislative Technology Center on third floor (Room 359)
- Legislative Accounting office on first floor

(Room 1010)

- Information Office on 10th floor (Call 1-2788 for access instructions)

## Phone, Fax Machine Purchases, Use

The state's telecommunication system may be used by state employees and officials for local calls and long-distance calls to children at home, teachers, doctors, day care centers, baby sitters and other family members to inform them of unexpected schedule changes and for other essential personal business. Calls must be kept to a minimum and must not interfere with the conduct of state business. Essential personal long distance calls must be collect, charged to a third-party or charged to a personal credit card. (Section 81-1120.27)

Pursuant to sections 49-14,101, 50-401.05 and policies adopted by the Executive Board, a member of the Legislature may install and use with private funds a telephone line, telephone and fax machine in his or her public office for private purposes.

Your phone records will be provided monthly for your review and approval. Your phone records are public records. Pursuant to 81-1120.27, legislators, however, do have the ability to screen out sensitive and confidential phone calls. That ability to screen out certain calls is based on the important principal of legislator/constituent confidentiality. The Legislative Accounting Office can apprise you of the proper procedure for screening those types of phone calls.

## Mail Procedures and Schedule

Legislative Council mail is distributed in Room 2021. Outgoing mail is processed and picked up by the state Central Mail Room staff at designated times.

Heavy mail should be marked 1st class in the upper left hand corner of the envelope or

it will be sent the most economical way. If you have questions about the most economical route, please ask.

Notification of incoming certified mail is placed in senators' boxes in Room 2021. A senator's staff member may pick up special mail at the State Office Building, U.S. Post Office before 4 p.m. Note, the senator must sign the certified mail notice, and the staff member must show identification with their access card. Please see mail room staff for assistance.

The words "Interoffice" or "Interagency" should be in the top right corner of an envelope, along with a State Capitol return address. Please drop this mail in the "Interagency" slot.

DAS policy regarding interagency mail is as follows: Unidentified interagency mail (without return address or identifiable sending-agency markings) addressed to senators and/or Legislative Council personnel, will be bundled and returned to the Materiel Division, DAS, to be opened and returned to the appropriate agency director, if discernible.

Please be sure that complete return addresses are used. Rubber bands should be placed around bundles of mail and the number of pieces indicated on the top piece. Bundles of five envelopes or more do not need to be sealed. Please stack flaps open and place a rubber band around the stack. Single pieces always must be sealed. Please bundle thicker envelopes separately.

All mail must have a state return address, including stamped and interoffice mail. Please be sure that complete return addresses are used. If return addresses are missing or incomplete, the mail will not be processed.

All legislative mail must be processed through Room 2021. The two identified mail slots make mail sorting more efficient. Your cooperation in sorting metered and interagency mail will be appreciated. Personal stamped mail must be



dropped in the slot in the mailroom on first floor, Room 1419. Personal stamped mail cannot be left in Room 2021.

**PRESORT** — Outgoing: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (from Room 2021)

**NON-PRESORT** — Outgoing: 2:30 p.m.

**UPS, EXPRESS MAIL** — Outgoing: 2:00 p.m.

**U.S. MAIL** — Incoming: 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.

**INTERAGENCY** — Incoming: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m.

## Executive Board Postal/Printing Policy

### Regulatory Procedures

In accordance with Sections 49-14, 101(3), 49-14, 101(4), and 81-165 Revised Statutes of Nebraska, the policy of the Executive Board will be that: the privilege of sending mail using public personnel, resources, property and funds shall be established under this regulatory procedure in order to assist and expedite the conduct of the official business, activities and duties of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska.

- a) It is the intent of the Executive Board that such official business, activities and duties cover all matters which directly or indirectly pertain to the legislative process or to any legislative representative functions generally, or to the function, working or operating of the Legislature and the performance of official duties in connection therewith, and shall include, but not be limited to, the conveying of information to the public, and the requesting of the views of the public, or the views and information of other authority of government, as a guide or means of assistance in performance of those functions.
- b) It is the intent of the Executive Board that mail matter which may be sent at public expense specifically includes, but is not limited to:
  1. Mail matter to any person and to all agencies and officials of federal, state and local governments regarding programs, decisions and other related matters of public concern or public service, including any matter relating to actions of a past or current session of the Legislature.
  2. Newsletters or press releases which may deal with such matters as the impact of laws and decisions of state government on local governments and individual citizens; reports on public and official actions taken by members of the Legislature; and discussions of proposed or pending legislation or governmental actions and the positions of the members of the Legislature and/or arguments for or against such matters.
  3. Questionnaires seeking public opinion on any law, pending or proposed legislation, public issue or subject.
  4. Mail matter dispatched by a member of the Legislature between his or her Lincoln office and any legislative district offices or between his or her district offices.
  5. Mail matter directed by one member of the Legislature to another

- member of the Legislature or to representation of the legislative bodies of local governments.
6. Mail matter expressing condolences to a person who has suffered a loss or congratulations to a person who has achieved some personal or public distinction.
  7. Mail matter which consists of state laws, state regulations and other state publications, publications purchased with state funds or publications containing items of general information.
- c) The Clerk of the Legislature may print the following items, as needed, for each member of the Legislature: business cards; envelopes (#10 regular); envelopes (#10 window); letterhead; note cards and envelopes; scratch pads; post cards and envelopes; and congratulations folders. Any other print request will require the approval of the Chairperson of the Executive Board.
  - d) It is the intent of the Executive Board that the privilege of sending mail at public expense under this Regulatory Procedure shall not permit, and may not be used for, the transmission through the mails at public expense, of matter which in its nature is purely personal to the sender or which is primarily political in nature and unrelated to the official business, activities and duties of the members, officials and employees of the Legislature.
  - e) It is the intent of the Executive Board that large mass mailings be discouraged. Consequently, each member of the Legislature will be allowed to mail 200 pieces on any one calendar day not to exceed 1,000 pieces in any one calendar month. Each standing Committee Chairperson,

the Executive Board Chairperson and the Speaker of the Legislature will be allowed 200 pieces each day not to exceed 1,500 in any one calendar month. There will be no carry-over for unused portions of the mail allotment, and one member may not transfer mail privileges to another member. The Clerk of the Legislature shall notify the member when he or she has reached the maximum limit and that no further mail will be processed for that respective time frame.

Any expenses associated with a mailing contracted for with sources outside the Legislature, such as the preparation of mailing labels or the acquisition of a mailing list system, will be paid for by the individual senator.

- f) In addition, members are prohibited from mailing newsletters and mass opinion surveys or questionnaires with public funds in any calendar year that the member is a candidate for reelection to the Legislature or election to any other public office.

This policy became effective August 1, 1995. It replaced policies on this subject approved on December 13, 1979; November 23, 1981; December 17, 1981; and August 1, 1985, which were rescinded.

## Interns

Interns are not allowed access to the legislative chamber.

## Policy Manual

*The Legislature's Policy Manual* (burgundy color, three-ring binder) contains a compilation of current Legislative Council policies and information on legislative operations. Periodically, modifications and replacement policies, as adopted by the

Executive Board, are provided to each senator's office. *The Legislature's Policy Manual* should be kept current as a permanent office reference.

## Hearing Room Reservations

Individual legislators may reserve the use of legislative space for an expressed purpose by filing a "legislative room request form" with the Clerk of the Legislature. The form is available on the Uninet under the "Resources" tab. It is necessary for the individual legislator to actively participate in and have ultimate responsibility for any activity conducted in legislative space reserved for him or her. More information about reserving hearing rooms is in the Policies Governing the Use of Legislative Space, which follows.

## Policies Governing the Use of Legislative Space

Legislative space shall include all portions of the State Capitol controlled or occupied by the Legislature, its members and staff. Public legislative area shall include all legislative space other than offices of legislators and legislative staff (i.e. Hearing Rooms, Warner and Norris Legislative Chambers, Senate Lounge).

The needs of the Legislature shall in all cases have priority over requests from individual legislators, state agencies or public organizations. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature is responsible for coordinating use of public legislative areas. Reserved space can be cancelled at any time in order to conform with the needs of the Legislature.

An area designated as the Legislative Press Room will be located in Room 1200 of the State Capitol. This space is being set aside for the exclusive use of sitting legislators to hold and conduct press conferences and press briefings. Only current members may reserve, use and/or participate in activities in the Legislative Press

Room. The intent is to provide a forum designed as a one-way communications device so that only members of the media physically present may pose questions to the legislative sponsor of the press conference. Those media entities connected via a phone bridge will only be allowed to monitor the press conference and will not have the ability to pose questions. The use of the Legislative Press Room by any sitting member must relate to the performance of and the carrying out of a legislator's official duties. The activity scheduled in the Legislative Press Room should be informational in nature to either a local, regional or statewide population. Use of the Legislative Press Room for personal campaign activity is expressly prohibited. It shall be necessary for a legislator to reserve the Legislative Press Room by using a "space usage form" and complying with the requirements as noted below. The final decision as to use of the Legislative Press Room shall rest with the Clerk of the Legislature and is subject to appeal to the Executive Board.

The Norris Legislative Chamber (West Chamber), the Hasebroock Room (West Senate Lounge), the Legislative Press Room, the Wherry Room (East Senate Lounge) and Room 2022 are not available for use by state agencies or public organizations for any purpose.

The Norris Chamber (West Chamber) and the Legislative Press Room may not be used for campaign-related activity. Photo or video sessions or press conferences in the Norris Chamber (West Chamber) or the Legislative Press Room for non-legislators or former legislators is expressly prohibited.

All other public legislative areas, including all committee hearing rooms, the Warner Legislative Chamber (East Chamber) and public meeting rooms, shall be available for use by the various state agencies and qualifying public organizations.

The following requirements shall apply:

**Individual Legislators/Constituents:** Individual legislators shall have the opportunity to reserve use of legislative space for an expressed purpose. However, it shall be necessary for the individual legislator to actively participate in and have ultimate responsibility for conducting the meeting. Space may be reserved in any one of three-hour increments: 7:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m. In order to maximize the use of space by legislators/constituents and public organizations, booking for more than one three-hour segment will not be permitted. Legislators, when requesting use of legislative space, shall file with the Clerk's Office a "space usage form," which shall be designed by the Clerk and approved by the Executive Board. Personal staff of the sponsoring legislator shall have the responsibility for ensuring that the use of legislative space is consistent with these policy provisions. The request for use of legislative space by an individual legislator should be related to performance of and carrying out his/her official duties. In other words, the activity should be for information gathering or dissemination or educational in scope and should relate to the formulation of state policy. Press conferences held by individual legislators fall within this category. The reservation of public legislative areas by legislators for holding a press conference by non-legislators is not permitted unless the legislator is an active participant in the press conference.

**State Agencies:** State agencies desiring to use public legislative areas shall submit their request in writing to the Clerk's Office. Confirmation of use of legislative space will not be provided until the written request is received. The request shall include the agency name, proposed date of the meeting, purpose of the meeting and the number of persons expected to attend. In addition, the letter should indicate the name and daytime telephone number of a contact person, plus any other special details or requirements (i.e. equipment

needed). The purpose of the meeting shall be consistent with the role and mission of the requesting state agency and shall involve only government-related purposes and/or business activities.

**Public Organizations:** The use of legislative areas by public organizations shall be limited to educational and information meetings that have a reasonable relationship to the legislative process. A request for use of legislative space by a public organization shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Legislature for approval. Space may be reserved in any one of three-hour increments: 7:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m. In order to maximize the use of space by legislators/constituents and public organizations, booking for more than one three-hour segment will not be permitted. Hearing rooms will not be provided to public organizations if the purpose for the meeting is to advocate the introduction of legislation or to encourage or oppose the enactment of any legislation, resolution or other decision that is or may be before the Legislature or its committees.

Any requests by a public group shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Some of the factors used in determining either approval or denial of the request include the following: purpose of the group, reason for the meeting, whether or not public officials are involved and whether the group or association is a statewide organization.

**Miscellaneous Provisions:** The following general provisions shall apply to legislators, state agencies or organizations using public legislative areas:

- A) The final decision as to use of legislative space shall rest with the Clerk of the Legislature.
- B) Nothing is to be applied, hung, or affixed to ceilings, wall, floors, furniture or other surfaces in public legislative space without prior written authorization from the



Clerk's Office. Furthermore, furniture in these public legislative spaces is not to be moved without prior authorization from the Clerk's Office.

- C) All requests for use of the Legislative Press Room and the public legislative areas shall be reviewed by the Clerk of the Legislature in the order of receipt. In case of conflicts, the earlier written request shall have priority, except that the Legislature and its members shall have priority over state agency and public group usage.
- D) The effect of any proposed special event upon the regular activities of the Legislature shall be considered before permission for use of public legislative space is granted.
- E) Events involving food service of any kind will generally not be permitted except in designated food areas. No hot breakfast service will be allowed inside legislative designated food areas at any time. Furthermore, in the case of a weekend event involving the use of legislative space, no food service will be allowed. Exceptions to the policy may be considered only in instances where such an event is of great importance or significance to the Legislature or state government.
- F) Normal business hours for use of public legislative areas shall be Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- G) Any organization requesting use of public legislative areas shall be asked to provide a program or agenda of the planned meeting activity as early as practicable prior to the meeting. Failure to supply a program or meeting agenda shall result in forfeiture of the room's use.
- H) Any state agency or public group requesting use of public legislative areas should submit its request as early as practicable prior to the meeting.
- I) All sponsoring organizations shall be

responsible for any and all damage occurring to public legislative areas as a result of the event. In instances where a legislator(s) has reserved space, the legislator's personal staff shall be responsible for ensuring compliance in the use of the room with legislative council policy.

- J) Use of public legislative areas shall not prohibit or restrict access to other public areas of the Capitol during hours the building is open. (2/07)

### **Warner Legislative Chamber Space Usage Policy**

The Legislature has established a Space Usage Policy designed to govern how and when public legislative space is to be utilized. The provisions of that policy are applicable in the utilization of the Warner Legislative Chamber. In addition, the following constitutes additional guidelines to be followed in the use of the Warner Legislative Chamber.

The Warner Legislative Chamber, which includes three visitor balconies, is a designated preservation space within the Capitol and was restored and renovated by the Nebraska Legislature in the fall of 1998 and, as such, shall be subject to the following requirements for its use.

1. The use of this chamber may only be granted by written approval of the Clerk of the Legislature after filling out a "Legislative Room Request Form" two days in advance of the intended event. By so doing, the applicant acknowledges awareness of and agrees to adhere to the provisions of the Space Usage Policy.
2. Events involving the Legislature or agencies of state government shall take precedent over activities of non-state government agencies. Therefore, the Legislature reserves the right to cancel

previously approved events in this chamber at any time.

3. Routine physical access to the Warner Legislative Chamber shall be made via the southeast corner door or the north or south double doors. The hand-carved Indian doors from the rotunda shall only be used during the course of a scheduled event held in the chamber.
4. The seating capacity of this chamber is limited to 300 by state law through the State Fire Marshal's office. At no time shall the number of room occupants exceed this limit, which is defined by the number of chairs or bench seating located within the chamber. No additional seating may be brought into the room. Standing in aisles, under the balconies, or around the perimeter of the chamber is not allowed when all available seating has been occupied.

The maximum number allowable on the chamber floor is 159 (125 side chairs, 34 leather chairs). The maximum number allowable in the balcony areas is 140.
5. Smoking or use of tobacco products of any kind are prohibited in this chamber.
6. The use of candles or open flames are prohibited in this chamber.
7. Food and/or drink items are prohibited in this chamber.
8. The audio-visual and computer equipment housed in this chamber may be used only as directed and specifically approved in writing on the Room Request Form. All user groups wishing to operate these components shall stipulate which feature(s) they wish to use during their event (indicate by checking boxes on equipment form). Instructions will be given to user groups for the use of the equipment/features approved. Only the

equipment specifically authorized may be operated by user groups.

9. This chamber is appointed with furniture and furnishing items original to the Capitol and are inventoried specifically to this room. It is expected that user groups will use the room as it is arranged and not move, alter, or remove furnishings from the chamber. All moving and arrangement of furnishings or equipment in this chamber shall be the responsibility of the Legislature, or, depending on the nature of the event, Office of the Capitol Commission. This requirement applies to the window draperies in the north and south balconies as well. User groups may not bring auxiliary equipment into the chamber for any purpose except that which has been approved in advance. No banners, wall hangings, or other displays incapable of being set on a table, may be used in this room. No signs, posters, or similar material shall be affixed to the walls, railings, desks, or other architectural finishes of the space. Pianos, organs or other large musical instruments may not be brought into this chamber.

## **Public Records Statutes**

The following are public records statutes. They stipulate that state senators' correspondence, memoranda and records of telephone calls are confidential and may be withheld from the public. See Section 84-712.05.

## **Section 84-712**

**Public records; free examination; memorandum and abstracts; copies; fees.**

- (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by statute, all citizens of this state and all other persons interested in the examination of the public records as defined in



section 84-712.01 are hereby fully empowered and authorized to (a) examine such records, and make memoranda, copies using their own copying or photocopying equipment in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, and abstracts therefrom, all free of charge, during the hours the respective offices may be kept open for the ordinary transaction of business and (b) except if federal copyright law otherwise provides, obtain copies of public records in accordance with subsection (3) of this section during the hours the respective offices may be kept open for the ordinary transaction of business.

- (2) Copies made by citizens or other persons using their own copying or photocopying equipment pursuant to subdivision (1)(a) of this section shall be made on the premises of the custodian of the public record or at a location mutually agreed to by the requester and the custodian.
- (3)
  - (a) Copies may be obtained pursuant to subdivision (1)(b) of this section only if the custodian has copying equipment reasonably available. Such copies may be obtained in any form designated by the requester in which the public record is maintained or produced, including, but not limited to, printouts, electronic data, discs, tapes, and photocopies.
  - (b) Except as otherwise provided by statute, the custodian of a public record may charge a fee for providing copies of such public record pursuant to subdivision (1)(b) of this section, which fee shall not exceed the actual cost of making the copies available. For purposes of this subdivision, (i) for photocopies,

the actual cost of making the copies available shall not exceed the amount of the reasonably calculated actual cost of the photocopies, (ii) for printouts of computerized data on paper, the actual cost of making the copies available shall include the reasonably calculated actual cost of computer run time and the cost of materials for making the copy, and (iii) for electronic data, the actual cost of making the copies available shall include the reasonably calculated actual cost of the computer run time, any necessary analysis and programming, and the production of the report in the form furnished to the requester. State agencies which provide electronic access to public records through a portal established under section 84-1204 shall obtain approval of their proposed reasonable fees for such records pursuant to sections 84-1205.02 and 84-1205.03, if applicable, and the actual cost of making the copies available may include the approved fee for the portal.

- (c) This section shall not be construed to require a public body or custodian of a public record to produce or generate any public record in a new or different form or format modified from that of the original public record.
- (d) If copies requested in accordance with subdivision (1)(b) of this section are estimated by the custodian of such public records to cost more than fifty dollars, the custodian may require the requester to

- furnish a deposit prior to fulfilling such request.
- (4) Upon receipt of a written request for access to or copies of a public record, the custodian of such record shall provide to the requester as soon as is practicable and without delay, but not more than four business days after actual receipt of the request, either (a) access to or, if copying equipment is reasonably available, copies of the public record, (b) if there is a legal basis for denial of access or copies, a written denial of the request together with the information specified in section 84-712.04, or (c) if the entire request cannot with reasonable good faith efforts be fulfilled within four business days after actual receipt of the request due to the significant difficulty or the extensiveness of the request, a written explanation, including the earliest practicable date for fulfilling the request, an estimate of the expected cost of any copies, and an opportunity for the requester to modify or prioritize the items within the request.
- public record when maintained in computer files.
  - (2) When a custodian of a public record of a county provides to a member of the public, upon request, a copy of the public record by transmitting it from a modem to an outside modem, a reasonable fee may be charged for such specialized service. Such fee may include a reasonable amount representing a portion of the amortization of the cost of computer equipment, including software, necessarily added in order to provide such specialized service. This subsection shall not be construed to require a governmental entity to acquire computer capability to generate public records in a new or different form when that new form would require additional computer equipment or software not already possessed by the governmental entity.
  - (3) Sections 84-712 to 84-712.03 shall be liberally construed whenever any state, county, or political subdivision fiscal records, audit, warrant, voucher, invoice, purchase order, requisition, payroll, check, receipt or other record of receipt, cash or expenditure involving public funds is involved in order that the citizens of this state shall have the full right to know of and have full access to information on the public finances of the government and the public bodies and entities created to serve them.

### **Section 84-712.01**

**Public records; right of citizens; full access; fee authorized.**

- (1) Except when any other statute expressly provides that particular information or records shall not be made public, public records shall include all records and documents, regardless of physical form, of or belonging to this state, any county, city, village, political subdivision, or tax-supported district in this state, or any agency, branch, department, board, bureau, commission, council, subunit or committee of any of the foregoing. Data which is a public record in its original form shall remain a

### **Section 84-712.02**

**Public records; claimants before United States Department of Veterans Affairs; certified copies free of charge.**

When it is requested by any claimant before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or his or her agent or attorney that certified copies of any public record be furnished for the proper and effective presentation of any such

claim in such department, the officer in charge of such public records shall furnish or cause to be furnished to such claimant or his or her agent or attorney a certified copy thereof free of charge.

### **Section 84-712.03**

#### **Public records; denial of rights; remedies.**

Any person denied any rights granted by sections 84-712 to 84-712.03 may elect to:

- (1) File for speedy relief by a writ of mandamus in the district court within whose jurisdiction the state, county or political subdivision officer who has custody of the public record can be served; or
- (2) Petition the Attorney General to review the matter to determine whether a record may be withheld from public inspection or whether the public body that is custodian of such record has otherwise failed to comply with such sections. This determination shall be made within fifteen calendar days of the submission of the petition. If the Attorney General determines that the record may not be withheld or that the public body is otherwise not in compliance, the public body shall be ordered to disclose the record immediately or otherwise comply. If the public body continues to withhold the record or remain in noncompliance, the person seeking disclosure or compliance may (a) bring suit in the trial court of general jurisdiction or (b) demand in writing that the Attorney General bring suit in the name of the state in the trial court of general jurisdiction for the same purpose. If such demand is made, the Attorney General shall bring suit within fifteen calendar days of its receipt. The requester shall have an absolute right to intervene as a full party in the suit at any time.

In any suit filed under this section, the court has jurisdiction to enjoin the public body from withholding records, to order the disclosure and to grant such other equitable relief as may be proper. The court shall determine the matter de novo and the burden is on the public body to sustain its action. The court may view the records in controversy in camera before reaching a decision, and in the discretion of the court other persons, including the requester, counsel and necessary expert witnesses may be permitted to view the records, subject to necessary protective orders.

Proceedings arising under this section, except as to the cases the court considers of greater importance, shall take precedence on the docket over all other cases and shall be assigned for hearing, trial or argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.

### **Section 84-712.04**

#### **Public records; denial of rights; public body; provide information.**

- (1) Any person denied any rights granted by sections 84-712 to 84-712.03 shall receive in written form from the public body which denied the request for records at least the following information:
  - (a) A description of the contents of the records withheld and a statement of the specific reasons for the denial, correlating specific portions of the records to specific reasons for the denial, including citations to the particular statute and subsection thereof expressly providing the exception under section 84-712.01 relied on as authority for the denial;
  - (b) The name of the public official or employee responsible for the decision to deny the request; and

- (c) Notification to the requester of any administrative or judicial right of review under section 84-712.03.
- (2) Each public body shall maintain a file of all letters of denial of requests for records. This file shall be made available to any person on request.

### **Section 84-712.05**

#### **Records which may be withheld from the public; enumerated.**

The following records, unless publicly disclosed in an open court, open administrative proceeding, or open meeting or disclosed by a public entity pursuant to its duties, may be withheld from the public by the lawful custodian of the records:

- (1) Personal information in records regarding a student, prospective student, or former student of any educational institution or exempt school that has effectuated an election not to meet state approval or accreditation requirements pursuant to section 79-1601 when such records are maintained by and in the possession of a public entity, other than routine directory information specified and made public consistent with 20 U.S.C. 1232g, as such section existed on January 1, 2003;
- (2) Medical records, other than records of births and deaths and except as provided in subdivision (5) of this section, in any form concerning any person; records of elections filed under section 44-2821; and patient safety work product under the Patient Safety Improvement Act;
- (3) Trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in progress and unpublished, and other proprietary or commercial information which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve no public purpose;
- (4) Records which represent the work product of an attorney and the public body involved which are related to preparation for litigation, labor negotiations, or claims made by or against the public body or which are confidential communications as defined in section 27-503;
- (5) Records developed or received by law enforcement agencies and other public bodies charged with duties of investigation or examination of persons, institutions, or businesses, when the records constitute a part of the examination, investigation, intelligence information, citizen complaints or inquiries, informant identification, or strategic or tactical information used in law enforcement training, except that this subdivision shall not apply to records so developed or received relating to the presence of and amount or concentration of alcohol or drugs in any body fluid of any person;
- (6) Appraisals or appraisal information and negotiation records concerning the purchase or sale, by a public body, of any interest in real or personal property, prior to completion of the purchase or sale;
- (7) Personal information in records regarding personnel of public bodies other than salaries and routine directory information;
- (8) Information solely pertaining to protection of the security of public property and persons on or within public property, such as specific, unique vulnerability assessments or specific, unique response plans, either of which is intended to prevent or mitigate criminal acts the public disclosure of which would create a substantial likelihood of endangering public safety or property; computer or communications network schema,

- passwords, and user identification names; guard schedules; or lock combinations;
- (9) The security standards, procedures, policies, plans, specifications, diagrams, access lists, and other security-related records of the Lottery Division of the Department of Revenue and those persons or entities with which the division has entered into contractual relationships. Nothing in this subdivision shall allow the division to withhold from the public any information relating to amounts paid persons or entities with which the division has entered into contractual relationships, amounts of prizes paid, the name of the prize winner, and the city, village, or county where the prize winner resides;
- (10) With respect to public utilities and except as provided in sections 43-512.06 and 70-101, personally identified private citizen account payment information, credit information on others supplied in confidence, and customer lists;
- (11) Records or portions of records kept by a publicly funded library which, when examined with or without other records, reveal the identity of any library patron using the library's materials or services;
- (12) Correspondence, memoranda, and records of telephone calls related to the performance of duties by a member of the Legislature in whatever form. The lawful custodian of the correspondence, memoranda, and records of telephone calls, upon approval of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, shall release the correspondence, memoranda, and records of telephone calls which are not designated as sensitive or confidential in nature to any person performing an audit of the Legislature. A member's correspondence, memoranda, and records of confidential telephone calls related to the performance of his or her legislative duties shall only be released to any other person with the explicit approval of the member;
- (13) Records or portions of records kept by public bodies which would reveal the location, character, or ownership of any known archaeological, historical, or paleontological site in Nebraska when necessary to protect the site from a reasonably held fear of theft, vandalism, or trespass. This section shall not apply to the release of information for the purpose of scholarly research, examination by other public bodies for the protection of the resource or by recognized tribes, the Unmarked Human Burial Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act, or the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;
- (14) Records or portions of records kept by public bodies which maintain collections of archaeological, historical, or paleontological significance which reveal the names and addresses of donors of such articles of archaeological, historical, or paleontological significance unless the donor approves disclosure, except as the records or portions thereof may be needed to carry out the purposes of the Unmarked Human Burial Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act or the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;
- (15) Job application materials submitted by applicants, other than finalists, who have applied for employment by any public body as defined in section 84-1409. For purposes of this subdivision, (a) job application materials means employment applications, resumes, reference letters,



and school transcripts and (b) finalist means any applicant (i) who reaches the final pool of applicants, numbering four or more, from which the successful applicant is to be selected, (ii) who is an original applicant when the final pool of applicants numbers less than four, or (iii) who is an original applicant and there are four or fewer original applicants;

- (16) Records obtained by the Public Employees Retirement Board pursuant to section 84-1512;
- (17) Social security numbers; credit card, charge card, or debit card numbers and expiration dates; and financial account numbers supplied to state and local governments by citizens; and
- (18) Information exchanged between a jurisdictional utility and city pursuant to section 66-1867.

### **Section 84-712.06**

**Public record; portion provide; when.**

Any reasonably segregable public portion of a record shall be provided to the public as a public record upon request after deletion of the portions which may be withheld.

### **Section 84-712.07**

**Public records; public access; equitable relief; attorney's fees; costs.**

The provisions of sections 84-712, 84-712.01, 84-712.03 to 84-712.09, and 84-1413 pertaining

to the rights of citizens to access to public records may be enforced by equitable relief, whether or not any other remedy also is available. In any case in which the complainant seeking access has substantially prevailed, the court may assess against the public body which had denied access to their records, reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred by the complainant.

### **Section 84-712.08**

**Records; federal government; exception.**

If it is determined by any federal department or agency or other federal source of funds, services or essential information, that any provision of sections 84-712, 84-712.01, 84-712.03 to 84-712.09 and 84-1413 would cause the denial of any funds, services or essential information from the United States Government which would otherwise definitely be available to an agency of this state, such provision shall be suspended as to such agency, but only to the extent necessary to prevent denial of such funds, services or essential information.

### **Section 84-712.09**

**Violation; penalty.**

Any official who shall violate the provisions of sections 84-712, 84-712.01, and 84-712.03 to 84-712.08 shall be subject to removal or impeachment and in addition shall be deemed guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.



## EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

### Working With the Executive Branch of Government

The governor is the chief executive officer of the state of Nebraska. The governor's responsibilities include preparing the state budget, appointment of certain state officers, signing or vetoing legislation adopted by the Legislature, serving as commander-in-chief of the national guard, administering state affairs and carrying out all other constitutionally and statutorily defined duties.

Nebraska state government functions are carried out by agencies, boards, commissions, committees, councils and authorities.

### Governor's Policy Research Office

The Governor's Policy Research Office (PRO) is a statutory agency affiliated with the Governor's Office. It assists in the development, implementation and review of state government policy. The agency has broad statutory authority to direct, coordinate, advise and consult with other state government entities. The director serves at the pleasure of the governor. The agency is organized on a functional basis, with policy advisers serving as a primary source of information and as liaisons between the governor and other public/private entities on assigned policy areas.

The office monitors legislative bills, coordinates legislative activities of code agencies and coordinates the development and promotion of the governor's legislative agenda. The Policy Research Office serves as a specialized staff for the governor, and is available to assist legislators and their staff with communications with all agencies within the executive branch of government.

### Budget Division

The Budget Division is a division of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The Budget Division provides direction, coordination

and support for state agencies in the preparation of mid-biennium and biennial budget requests. The division assists the governor in preparing his or her state budget recommendations and administering the approved state budget.

The director has the responsibility for policies and initiatives that impact statewide operations and plays a key role in making decisions in the interest of economy and efficiency in government. The Budget Division is available to assist legislators and their staff on issues related to the state's budgetary process.

### Gubernatorial Action on Legislation

After the Legislature passes a bill on final reading, it goes to the governor for consideration. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to take action on a legislative bill. The following outlines the options available to the governor and the process the Legislature may follow as a result of his/her decision.

- The governor may sign the bill into law. If the bill does not contain the emergency clause and there are no operative date(s), the bill becomes effective three calendar months (rather than 90 days) after the Legislature adjourns sine die. If the bill contains the emergency clause, the bill becomes effective the next day after the governor signs it. If the bill contains operative date(s), the bill becomes effective on the dates specified in the bill.
- The governor may veto a bill. Any member of the Legislature may offer a motion to override the governor's veto of the bill. The Legislature must address the motion no later than five legislative days after

receiving the governor's veto. A three-fifths (30) vote of the elected members is required to override a veto. If the motion receives the 30 votes required, the bill becomes law notwithstanding the objections of the governor. If the motion does not receive the 30 votes required, the veto is sustained.

- The governor may line-item, reduce or outright veto an appropriation bill. The Appropriations Committee reviews the veto of budget bills, and provides a report to the Legislature within one legislative day. The committee may recommend to the Legislature an override of the veto, or it may recommend no override of the veto. If the committee recommends an override of the veto, that motion shall be the first motion considered by the Legislature. After that motion has been disposed of, any member of the Legislature may then offer a motion to override. A three-fifths (30) vote of the elected members is required to override a line-item veto.
- The governor may take no action on a legislative bill within the five day period. If that occurs, the bill becomes law without the governor's signature.

## **Signing Ceremony**

After a bill has been passed by the Legislature, occasionally a senator may ask the governor to hold a ceremony to sign the bill. This is referred to as a "signing ceremony." The governor, along with the introducer of the bill and other senators who may have been involved with the bill, holds an official ceremony in which the governor signs

the bill into law. The press may or may not be included in a signing ceremony. A more frequently used alternative is an informal signing ceremony. This typically involves a senator and supporters having their picture taken with the governor and the governor providing copies of the bill with his or her signature. A senator who wishes to have either type of ceremony should contact the Governor's Policy Research Office (PRO). Requests for bill signing ceremonies will be communicated to the governor by the PRO for consideration on a case by case basis.

## **Introduction at the Request of the Governor**

Legislative bills may be introduced at the request of the governor. The Governor's Office may work with a senator's office on a bill that contains subject matter they are both interested in, and may ask a senator to introduce the bill on his or her behalf. The bill will be delivered to the senator's office and the front page of the bill will be stamped with the words "At the Request of the Governor." The senator signs the bill and turns the bill into the Clerk's Office for introduction.

## **Introduction after the First 10 Days**

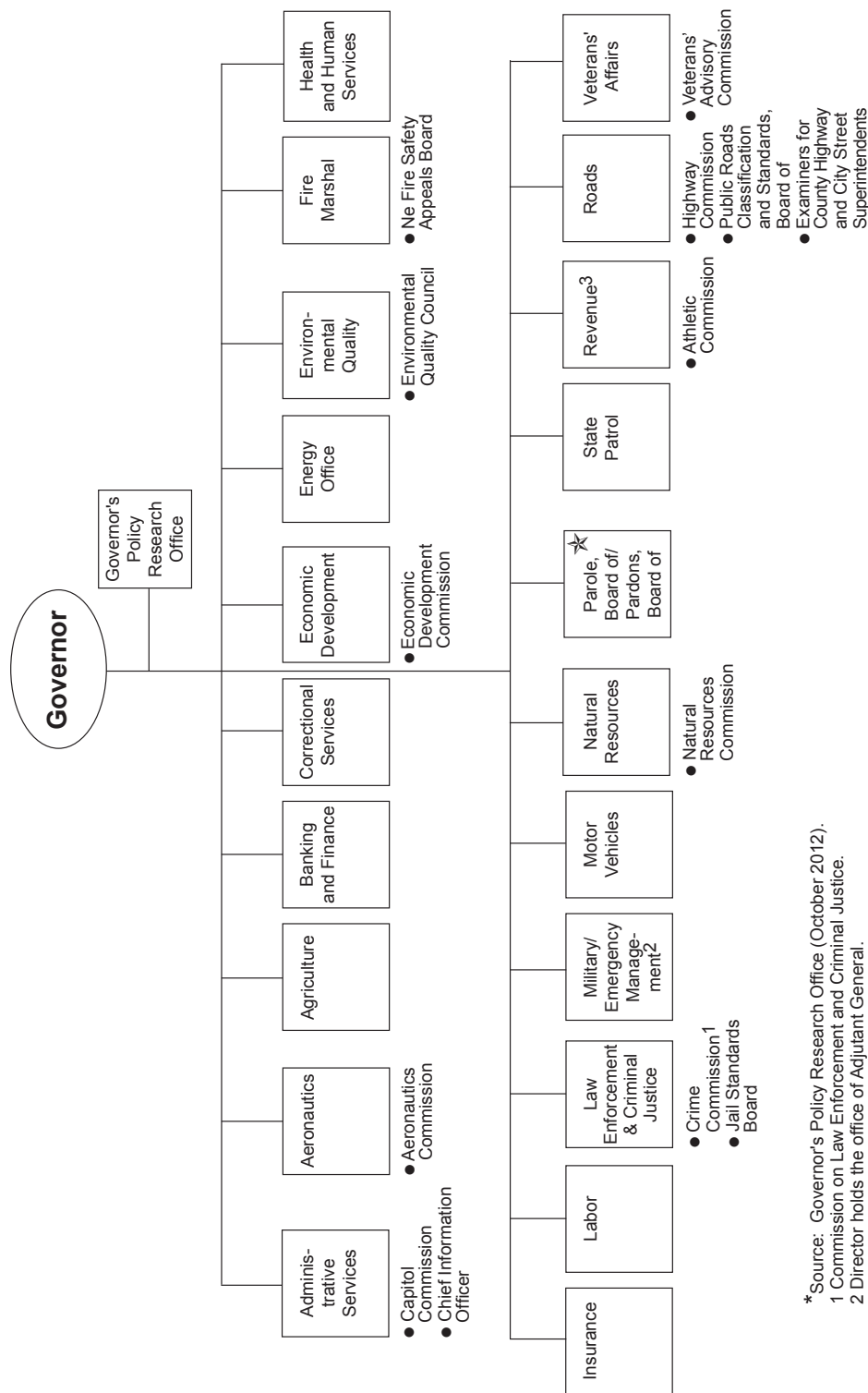
No bill shall be introduced after the 10th legislative day of the session, except bills introduced at the request of the governor, which may be introduced at any time during the session. It is extremely rare that a Governor submits a bill for introduction after the first 10 days of session.

### Code Agencies

Code agencies are state government departments and agencies subject to the governor's direct control. The directors of these agencies serve at the pleasure of the governor and are directly accountable to him or her. These entities are full-fledged agencies, have their own staff, are affiliated with no other agency and appear as distinct entities within the state budget.

### Nebraska State Government Organization — Executive Branch\*

Agencies Subject to Governor's Direct Control (Code Agencies)



\*Source: Governor's Policy Research Office (October 2012).

1 Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

2 Director holds the office of Adjutant General.

3 Director holds the constitutional office of Tax Commissioner.

★ Starred items are offices and agencies established in the Nebraska Constitution.

## Noncode Agencies

Noncode agencies are state government agencies not subject to the governor's direct control. All are full-fledged agencies, have their own staff, are affiliated with no other agency and also appear as distinct entities in the state budget.

### Nebraska State Government Organization — Executive Branch\* Executive Agencies<sup>1</sup> Not Subject to Governor's Direct Control (Noncode Agencies)

Abstracters Board of Examiners	Accountability & Disclosure Commission	Accountancy, Board of Public	Advocacy, Commission on Public	Arts Council	<b>Auditor of Public Accounts</b>	Barber Examiners, Board of	Blind & Visually Impaired, Commission for	Brand Committee	<b>Colleges, Board of Trustees of State</b>
Corn Board	Dairy Industrial Development Board, Nebraska	Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Commission for	Dry Bean Commission	<b>Education, Department of 2</b>	<b>Educational Lands &amp; Funds, Board of</b>	Electrical Board/Division, State	Engineers & Architects, Board of	Equal Opportunity Commission	Ethanol Board
Foster Care Review Board	Game & Parks Commission	Geologists, Board of	Grain Sorghum Board	Historical Society, State	Indian Affairs, Commission on	Industrial Relations, Commission of	Land Surveyors, Board of Examiners for	Landscape Architects, Board of	Latino-Americans, Commission on
Library Commission	Liquor Control Commission	Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board	Oil & Gas Conservation Commission	Pardons, Board of	Post-secondary Education, Coordinating Commission for	Power Review Board	Racing Commission	Real Property Appraiser Board	Real Estate Commission
	Retirement Board, Public Employees	<b>Secretary of State</b>	State Fair Board	Tax Equalization & Review Commission	<b>Treasurer, State</b>	<b>University of Nebraska, Board of Regents</b>	Wheat Board		

\* Source: Governor's Policy Research Office (October 2012).

<sup>1</sup>Including elected officials' offices (**in bold**).

<sup>2</sup>Includes State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education (appointed by board).

★ Starred items are offices and agencies established in the Nebraska Constitution.

## GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

**Act** — the proper term for a bill after it is enacted into law. Also, a term used to refer to a group of laws addressing a particular subject, such as the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act.

**Appropriation Bill ("A" Bill)** — a bill to appropriate funds to finance another bill bearing the same number.

**Attorney General's Opinion** — a written analysis of a question of law prepared by the attorney general for the governor, the head of an executive department or any state senator.

**Biennium** — the two-year period in which a single Legislature, such as the 102<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, exists. Also, the two fiscal years for which a single Legislature does budget planning and makes appropriations.

**Bill** — also called a Legislative Bill (LB). A bill is a proposal to create, change or delete one or more laws. See Act.

**Bracket** — to delay consideration of a bill.

**Call of the House** — a procedure used to compel attendance of unexcused senators in the chamber. Any senator may move for a call of the house, and a majority of senators voting is required to place the house under call.

**Carry-over Legislation** — bills and resolutions introduced during the regular session in an odd-numbered year and held over for consideration during the regular session in an even-numbered year.

**Chair** — the presiding officer. The lieutenant governor or speaker normally serves as chair, but other senators also may preside. The senator presiding is said to be "in the chair."

**Cloture** — a parliamentary action to cease debate on a bill and vote immediately on its advancement. A motion for cloture may be made after full and fair debate on a bill at any stage of consideration, and it requires a two-thirds vote (33 votes) for adoption.

**Committee on Committees** — the select committee that proposes appointments of senators

to other legislative committees at the beginning of each biennium.

**Committee Statement** — a statement indicating whether a committee voted to advance or kill a particular bill. Includes the roll call vote of committee members, a summary of the bill and any proposed committee amendments and a list of those who testified at the bill's hearing.

**Constitutional Amendment Resolution** — a proposal to amend the state constitution, ratify or reject an amendment to the U.S. Constitution or petition Congress about amending the U.S. Constitution. Resolutions proposing to amend the state constitution have the suffix "CA" after the resolution number and must be approved by Nebraska voters as well as the Legislature.

**Correctly Engrossed** — a term describing a bill that is reprinted for Final Reading with all adopted amendments incorporated.

**Consent Calendar** — a portion of the agenda in which relatively noncontroversial bills are considered and quickly advanced to the next legislative stage. Usually, a bill on consent calendar can be debated for no more than 15 minutes.

**"E" Clause** — see Emergency Clause.

**E & R** — see Enrollment and Review.

**Emergency Clause ("E" Clause)** — a provision allowing a bill or a portion of a bill to take effect immediately after the governor signs it or after an override of a governor's veto.

**Engrossment** — the process of preparing a bill for Final Reading by incorporating all adopted amendments.

**Enrollment and Review (E & R)** — the process of incorporating adopted amendments into a bill, reviewing the bill for technical and grammatical accuracy and making recommendations relative to arrangement, phraseology and correlation.

**Enrollment and Review Initial (E & R for**



**Review)** — the Enrollment and Review process that a bill undergoes after it is advanced from General File.

**Enrollment and Review Final (E & R for Engrossing)** — the Enrollment and Review process that a bill undergoes after it is advanced from Select File. During this stage, the bill is engrossed and reprinted for Final Reading.

**Executive Board of the Legislative Council** — a nine-member special committee that oversees legislative services, personnel and other internal affairs of the Legislature. The Executive Board also serves as the Reference Committee.

**Executive Session** — a closed meeting of a committee to discuss and act on bills and resolutions. An executive session is open only to committee members, committee staff and the media.

**Final Reading** — the third and last stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. The clerk reads the entire bill aloud, unless final reading is waived, and senators vote, without debate, on whether to submit the bill to the governor.

**Fiscal Note** — a statement prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimating the effect a bill would have on state and/or local expenditures and revenue.

**Floor** — the area of the legislative chamber where the senators sit. When a bill is advanced “to the floor,” that means the bill is being sent to the full Legislature for consideration.

**General File** — the first stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. Bills on General File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Select File.

**Germane** — relevant to the specific subject of the bill being considered. Any amendment

that is not germane is out of order.

**Hearing** — a regularly scheduled committee meeting to receive public comment on proposed bills and resolutions.

**History** — see Legislative History.

**House Under Call** — the term used when all unexcused senators are required to be in their seats in the chamber and unauthorized personnel must leave the floor.

**Indefinitely Postpone (IPP)** — to kill a bill.

**Initiative** — the power of the people, through the petition process, to enact laws and adopt constitutional amendments independently of the Legislature.

**Interim** — the period between regular legislative sessions.

**Interim Study Resolution** — a resolution authorizing a committee to study an issue following adjournment of a legislative session.

**Introducer's Statement of Intent** — see Statement of Intent.

**IPP** — see Indefinitely Postpone.

**Journal** — see Legislative Journal.

**Laid Over** — term used to describe a motion or bill on which action has been postponed.

**Laws of Nebraska (Session Laws)** — bound compilation of all laws and constitutional amendment resolutions passed in a legislative session, the state constitution and subject and section indexes.

**Legislative Council** — a council consisting of all members of the Legislature. The Legislative Council examines information relating to state government and the general welfare of the state and recommends legislation.

**Legislative History** — the committee and floor debate records for any bill. A history includes transcripts of the bill's hearing and all floor debate, the introducer's statement of intent and the committee statement.

**Legislative Journal** — official record of legislative floor action, including all motions, the



number of yeas and nays on each vote, how each senator voted on record votes, etc.

**Line-Item Veto** — the power of the governor to make specific reductions in any part of a budget bill passed by the Legislature. The Legislature may vote to override the veto.

**Machine Vote** — a vote taken by the electronic voting system. The voting board shows how each senator voted, but only vote totals are entered in the Legislative Journal.

**Major Proposal** — a bill or constitutional amendment resolution that the speaker designates as important enough for scheduling priority. Each session, up to five bills may be chosen as major proposals, all of which must be senator priority bills and must get the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Board.

**One-liner** — a brief, one-line description of a bill or resolution.

**President of the Legislature** — the lieutenant governor. While senators address the presiding officer as Mr. or Madame President, only the lieutenant governor holds that official title.

**Presiding Officer** — the president or the senator currently presiding over the Legislature.

**Priority Bill** — a bill that has priority status and generally is considered ahead of other bills in debate. Each senator may select one priority bill, each committee may select two priority bills and the speaker may select up to 25 priority bills.

**Record Vote** — a vote on which a record is kept of how each senator voted. The vote is taken by the electronic voting system, and the senators' names and corresponding votes are then printed in the Legislative Journal.

**Reference Committee** — the committee, made up of the nine Executive Board members, that refers bills, resolutions and gubernatorial appointments to other committees.

**Referendum** — the power of the people,

through the petition process, to repeal or amend any act, or part of an act, of the Legislature.

**Regular Session** — the annual legislative session that begins the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January. Regular sessions generally last 90 legislative days in odd-numbered years and 60 legislative days in even-numbered years.

**Resolution** — also known as a Legislative Resolution (LR), a proposal to make a formal expression of opinion, intent or recognition; amend the state or federal constitution; or authorize a study of an issue during the interim. See also Constitutional Amendment Resolution, Interim Study Resolution.

**Revisor Bill** — a bill, prepared by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, proposing a technical correction or the repeal of an obsolete statute.

**Roll Call Vote** — a vote during which the senators vote one at a time as the clerk reads their names. Senators cast their votes verbally, and their names and corresponding votes are printed in the Legislative Journal if the house is under call.

**Select Committee** — a permanent committee with a subject-matter jurisdiction related to the administration of the Legislature.

**Select File** — the second stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. Bills on Select File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Final Reading.

**Session** — a period of time, usually a number of days, during which the Legislature meets and transacts business. See Regular Session, Special Session.

**Session Laws** — compilation of all laws and constitutional amendment resolutions passed in a session.

**Sine Die** — without setting a future date for

reconvening. When the Legislature adjourns sine die, the legislative session is finished for the year.

**Slip Law** — a bill or constitutional amendment resolution printed individually in its approved form after being enacted into law or submitted to voters.

**Speaker of the Legislature** — the officer of the Legislature, elected from among the senators, who prepares the daily agenda and the session calendar and who presides in the absence of the lieutenant governor.

**Special Committee** — a committee created by law for a specific reason. Except for the Executive Board, special committees generally have no jurisdiction over bills or resolutions.

**Special Session** — a limited legislative session called for a specific purpose by the governor or two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

**Standing Committee** — a permanent committee with a subject-matter jurisdiction related to an area of public policy. Almost all bills and resolutions are referred to one of the 14

standing committees.

**Statement of Intent** — a statement, prepared by the sponsor of a bill, that briefly describes the bill and the reasons why it is being introduced.

**Summary Sheet** — a daily list of all legislative activity that has taken place in one legislative day, including action taken on bills and resolutions.

**Veto** — the power of the governor to reject bills passed by the Legislature. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to veto a bill.

The Legislature may vote to override the veto.

**Veto Override** — the power of the Legislature to pass a bill over the governor's veto. A veto override requires the approval of three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature.

**Voice Vote** — a vote in which senators cast their votes orally and no totals are recorded.

**Worksheet** — a list prepared daily that indicates the status of all bills and resolutions at the end of that legislative day.

## TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

In order to facilitate the smooth operation of the legislative process and management of the legislative institution, a variety of technological services are provided to senators and their offices.

### Office Computers, Equipment and Software

Each senator's full time office staff are equipped with a desktop computer to use in support of the office's work. The computers are connected to the Legislature's network, providing access to the Internet, e-mail and various servers containing legislative data and information.

Each desktop unit is equipped with a DVD-ROM burner to facilitate data storage. The PCs run the Windows 7 operating system and have LibreOffice software (Text Document, Spread Sheet, Presentation, Drawing, Data Base and Formula) installed. Each office has its own laser printer; computers can also send print jobs to a color laser printer located in the Legislative Mail/Copy Room. (Room 2021)

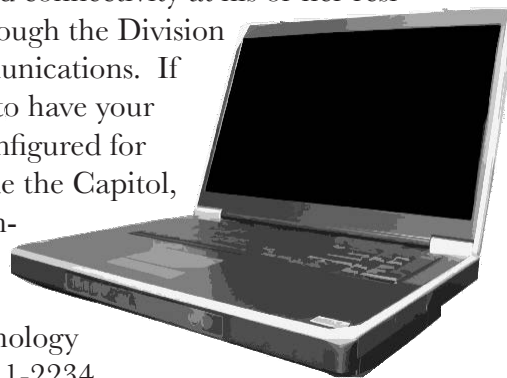
Executive Board policy does not permit the installation of hardware or software that is not approved by the Legislative Technology Center. If you have specific needs that are not met by existing technology hardware or software, please contact the Legislative Technology Center. In addition, the Executive Board has policies that specifically define the appropriate use of the legislative computer network.

### Laptops/Devices

Each senator is provided a laptop for his or her legislative responsibilities. This laptop provides senators with network access to legislative data and information, as well as e-mail and office documents. The laptops have wireless capability. Senators may take their laptops to their office, but they should be returned to the chamber when the

Legislature is in session.

Laptops also may be taken home or used while traveling. Senators who wish to have access to the legislative network are authorized to have broadband connectivity at his or her residence through the Division of Communications. If you wish to have your laptop configured for use outside the Capitol, please contact the Legislative Technology Center at 1-2234.



### Chamber Viewer

The Chamber Viewer is a custom-made computer browser-based application that provides legislative users with access to real-time legislative data and information during session. The Chamber Viewer system is managed through the computer system at the front of the chamber that helps manage the legislative process on the floor.

During legislative debate, the Chamber Viewer system can be used to view bills, amendments, fiscal notes and various other legislative documents, and to help senators track the progress of bills during the body's deliberations. As amendments to bills are filed with the clerk, they are transmitted to legislators and staff so that they may review the language of the proposal in real time.

### Training / Help Desk

Technology Center staff offer training opportunities and provide assistance through the Help Desk.

Training is available to senators and staff regarding legislative computers and the software applications used within the legislative environment. Small classroom training and large group

workshops are conducted throughout the year. Schedules will be available in advance. Notice is provided by email. Those wishing to take a class are requested to sign up with the Help Desk staff by calling 1-2234. Individualized instruction may be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Training packets for common tasks performed in this environment are available in the “Training” section of the UniNet under the heading of “Technology Training”.

If you need assistance while working in the chamber, Technology Center staff are often in the back of the legislative chamber. If they are not in the chamber at that time, please feel free to contact Dick Brown, the Assistant Clerk, at the front of the chamber. A staff member will come to the chamber and assist you.

## E-mail

Senators and staff have a legislative e-mail address. A senator’s legislative e-mail address is not made available to the public unless the senator authorizes it. Except in very limited cases, legislative staff e-mail addresses are not posted on the Legislature’s web site or publicized.

The Legislature uses Gmail for our email system. E-mail storage in Gmail is 25GB per user, so the storage capacity is virtually limitless. Attachment size is limited, but is large enough to accommodate nearly any document. Using Gmail through the Chrome browser is recommended for all legislative applications and web applications as well.

## Wireless Access

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has implemented a wireless data network in the Capitol which is available throughout the building. There are several connections available through the wireless network. The primary connection on the wireless system is NE1SECURE, which is used for access to the legislature’s private

network. Only legislative owned laptops or devices are allowed to connect via NE1SECURE to insure proper security to legislative data and computers. Legislative laptops or devices will be configured for use on this network by LTC staff. The second network is the Public network which is available for public use and also for laptops and other devices owned by senators and legislative staff.

If you are interested in using the wireless network, please contact the Legislative Technology Center at 1-2234.

## Miscellaneous Services

**Recording Press Actualities** — Senators may use recording equipment to record audio press releases and radio actualities pertaining to legislative business. Those releases and actualities can be retrieved by local radio stations via the Legislature’s web site. To use this service, contact the Legislative Technology Center Help Desk at 1-2234.

**Scanning/ PDF Documents** — Senators and staff may have documents scanned or converted into PDF at any of the following scanning stations:

- Mail/Copy room on second floor (Room 2021)
- Bill room on first floor (Room 1104)
- Legislative Research on first floor (Room 1201)
- Legislative Technology Center on third floor (Room 359)
- Legislative Accounting office on first floor (Room 1010)
- Information Office on 10th floor (Call 1-2788 for access instructions)

**Web Page Maintenance** — Each senator has a page on [NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov), the legislature’s

public website. The page contains basic information that includes the senator's picture, contact information, biography, district map, committee assignments, introduced bills and media releases. The Unicameral Information Office offers training to senators and staff wishing to provide con-

tent for their page. Legislative Technology Center and Unicameral Information Office staff do not participate in the development and maintenance of websites and pages outside the legislative environment related to political issues and campaigns.



## PUBLIC INFORMATION

### NebraskaLegislature.gov

The Clerk's Office provides Internet users with access to an abundance of information at NebraskaLegislature.gov, the Legislature's website. The Legislative Technology Center manages the site, while the UIO reviews and edits the content.

The site includes all introduced bills and resolutions under consideration, all Final Reading bills and resolutions, and all slip laws. These documents are provided using Adobe Acrobat Reader, which allows the user to see the same document that legislators and staff have at their disposal. Users can search for a bill or resolution by typing its number or by typing a word or phrase. These documents are generally updated on the web site daily.

The website also includes:

- a searchable infobase of the Nebraska statutes and constitution;
- the daily Legislative Journal, which can be viewed using Adobe Acrobat Reader;
- proposed amendments to all legislation, updated daily;
- summaries of legislative activity, transcripts, video footage and bill status information for all bills and resolutions;
- all statements of intent, committee statements and fiscal notes;
- the daily agenda;
- the session calendar;
- the daily worksheet and daily summary sheet;
- committee information, including memberships, meeting dates and locations;
- weekly committee hearing schedules;
- photos, biographies and contact information for all state senators;
- maps of legislative districts;

- photos of the Capitol, including both the Norris and Warner legislative chambers;
- the history of the Unicameral;
- a description of the legislative process;
- information about legislative divisions and major reports authored by them.

Senators and committees are provided a web page on the Legislature's site. Senators' pages contain a senator's contact information, biography, photos, committee memberships and introduced bills. Committee pages list the members and link to the committee's reports and hearing schedules. The Unicameral Information Office provides training on how to use and update these pages.

The site also streams live Internet video and audio coverage of all legislative floor proceedings with the help of NET.

Also contained on the site is the online version of the *Unicameral Update* news publication. The online *Update* provides daily coverage of legislative activities.

Additionally, the site houses the **Warner Institute for Education in Democracy**, an online learning resource for teachers and students interested in unicameralism and representative democracy.

### UniNet

Legislators and staff have exclusive access to the UniNet, a legislative intranet that provides resources for senators and legislative staff. The UniNet is managed by the Legislative Technology Center and the Unicameral Information Office under the auspices of the Clerk's Office, and is updated with information produced throughout the legislative environment.

The site provides:

- access to the National Conference of State Legislatures' website for legislators and staff;



- access to the chamber viewer system;
- a roster of legislators and staff;
- informational documents about internal policies and operations;
- information about legislative divisions and offices;
- training and development tools; and
- links to other resources that assist employees in their work.

The UniNet's Web address is: <http://uninet>.

## Publications

The Unicameral Information Office produces the *Unicameral Update*, an online news publication updated daily throughout session. The *Update* covers legislative activity, including stories on floor action and committee hearings with accompanying photos. The stories are published and distributed weekly in a print version as well.

Subscriptions to the weekly print version of the *Update* are free. If you submit the name and address of a subscriber to the Unicameral Information Office by Thursday, he or she will receive that current week's issue. In addition, requests for subscriptions or other information can be made by calling our 24-hour request line (402-471-2877).

Newspapers throughout the state are invited to reprint Update stories at no cost.

Other items produced regularly by the Unicameral Information Office are:

- *The Nebraska Legislature: The Nation's Only Unicameral*, a booklet containing a short history of the Unicameral Legislature, senators' pictures and the steps of how a bill becomes law.
- *The Lines of Government*, a pamphlet containing maps indicating election boundaries for the Legislature, the Public Service Commission, the State Board of Education and Congress.
- *Nebraska Legislature, Members and Committees*, a card listing all of the senators, their phone numbers and standing, select and special committee memberships.
- *Public Hearing Testimony in the Nebraska Legislature*, a brochure outlining the procedures for testifying at a public hearing on legislation being considered by committees.
- *Unicam Kids: A Student Guide to the Nebraska Legislature*, a booklet designed for students in grades 4-6 that provides information about the Legislature and incorporates games to test readers' knowledge.
- *Poster*, an artistically-designed poster including pictures and addresses of all the senators.
- *A Citizen's Legislature*, a trifold color brochure discussing unicameralism and the citizen's role in the legislative process.

## Warner Institute for Education in Democracy

The Nebraska Legislature decided in 1999 to help students understand the complexity and importance of representative democracy. Named for the late Senator Jerome Warner, the Warner Institute for Education in Democracy features individual civic education programs available to teachers and students across the state of Nebraska.

The Warner Institute provides a unique civic education program that is useful, helpful and beneficial for teachers, as well as interesting and instructive for the students. It is hoped that students who participate in any of the institute's programs will gain a greater understanding and appreciation for representative democracy and its role in our society.

Included in the Warner Institute's current array of programming are the following:

**America's Legislators Back to School**

(all grade levels) – Legislators are encouraged to return to the classroom to help students understand the legislative process and build links between schools and state government. Support and materials for the program are provided through the Unicameral Information Office and are available on the UniNet. The program is sponsored nationally by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

**Unicam Kids** (grades 4-6) - Unicam Kids is an educational web page with information about the history and processes of the Nebraska legislature and biographies of senators. The site also has a puzzle and a quiz that tests students' knowledge of the process.

**UniCAM Focus** (grades 9-12) - UniCAM

Focus provides teachers with web-based video lessons to use in helping students gain insight into various themes about representative democracy in our state. Each lesson is intended to serve as a supplement to a teacher's civics curriculum, and is accompanied by exercises and streamed videos that help explain the concepts of representative government to students. Teachers can download and print a teacher's guide to assist them in using the lessons and exercises.

**Unicameral Youth Legislature** (grades 9-12) - The Unicameral Youth Legislature is a three-day legislative simulation in which students take on the role of lawmakers. The camp is offered each June in collaboration with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Big Red summer camp program.